



A DISCUSSION ABOUT DISCUSSIONS

Increasing Student Interaction in Discussion Boards

Dr. Mark Gale | Dr. Kim Roberts | Mrs. Lynn Frank



PRESENTERS

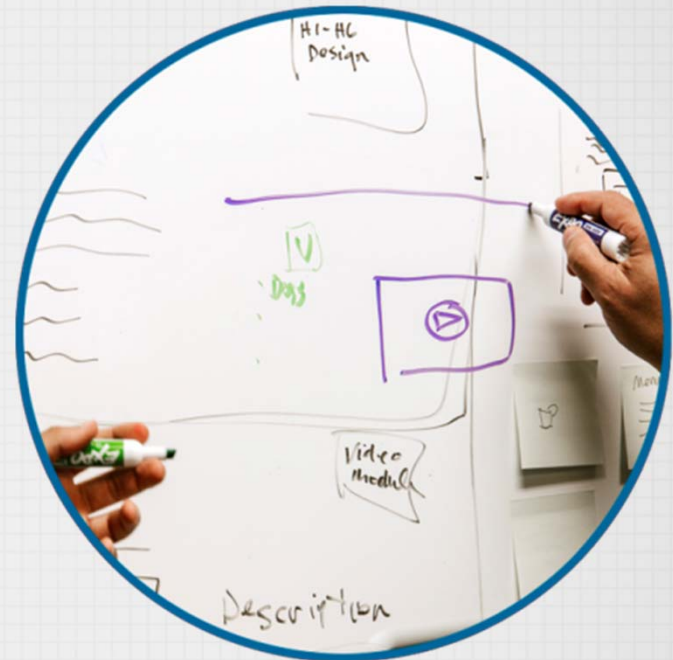
Quick Introductions:

- Dr. Mark Gale
Assistant Professor of Instructional Design
College of Education at Athens State University
- Dr. Kim Roberts
Associate Professor of Operations Management
College of Business at Athens State University
- 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:

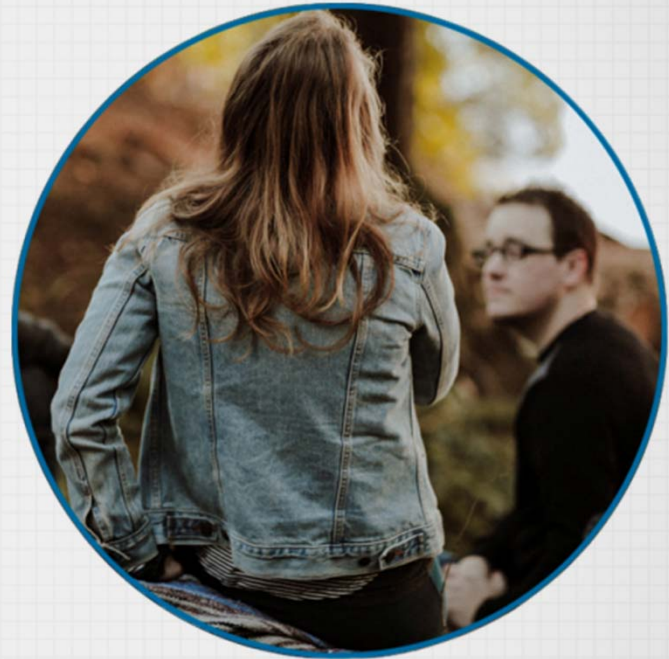
- Textbook or Lecture
 - Readily Available, Easy to Create
 - Less Engaging
- Multiple Sources
 - Middle Ground
- Non-Literary Sources
 - Harder to Moderate and Create
 - More Engaging



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:

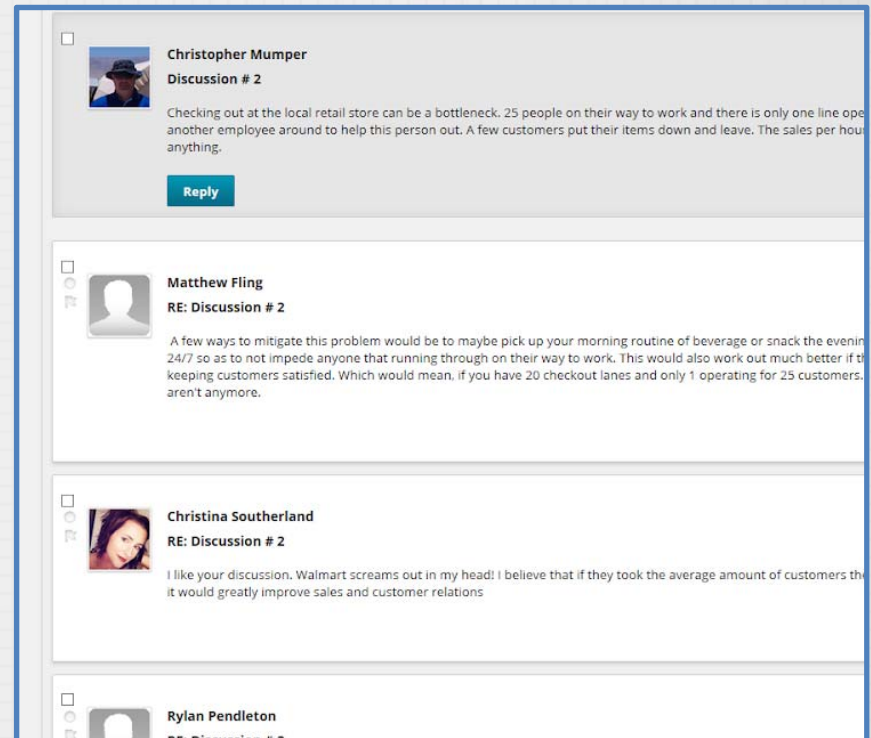
- Purpose and Background
- State the Actual Question
- Give an Example of a Response
- Provide Any Additional Examples
- Include Due Dates



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



The screenshot displays a discussion board interface with four posts. Each post includes a profile picture, a name, a title, and a text description. The first post is by Christopher Mumper, titled 'Discussion # 2', with a 'Reply' button. The second post is by Matthew Fling, titled 'RE: Discussion # 2'. The third post is by Christina Southerland, titled 'RE: Discussion # 2'. The fourth post is by Rylan Pendleton, titled 'RE: Discussion # 2'. The interface includes icons for reporting, replying, and deleting.

Christopher Mumper
Discussion # 2
Checking out at the local retail store can be a bottleneck. 25 people on their way to work and there is only one line open. Another employee around to help this person out. A few customers put their items down and leave. The sales per hour aren't anything.
Reply

Matthew Fling
RE: Discussion # 2
A few ways to mitigate this problem would be to maybe pick up your morning routine of beverage or snack the evening 24/7 so as to not impede anyone that running through on their way to work. This would also work out much better if keeping customers satisfied. Which would mean, if you have 20 checkout lanes and only 1 operating for 25 customers, aren't anymore.

Christina Southerland
RE: Discussion # 2
I like your discussion. Walmart screams out in my head! I believe that if they took the average amount of customers that it would greatly improve sales and customer relations

Rylan Pendleton
RE: Discussion # 2

FIRST IMPLEMENTATION

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying a Blackboard discussion board. The address bar shows the URL: https://athens.blackboard.com/webapps/discussionboard/do/message?action=list_messages&course_id=_173375_1&nav=discussion_board&conf_id=_51531_1&forum_id=_155540_1&message_id=_3115507_1. The browser tabs include 'Thread: Discussion # 2' and 'Kim Roberts - Outlook Web'. A dark sidebar on the left contains navigation links such as 'Email Instructor', 'Instructor Information', 'Student Help & Services', 'My Grades', 'Learning Modules', 'Discussion Forum', 'Tests & Quizzes', 'Case Study', 'TechSmith Relay Videos', 'Blackboard Collaborate', 'Bb Collaborate Sessions', 'Faculty/Course Evaluation', 'Tools', and 'Course Management'. The main content area displays a thread titled 'Discussion # 2' with four posts, each dated '3 months ago':

- Christopher Mumper**: "Checking out at the local retail store can be a bottleneck. 25 people on their way to work and there is only one line open to check out at. This building has 20 registers and they have put their slowest person at the checkout and not another employee around to help this person out. A few customers put their items down and leave. The sales per hour will be greatly diminished, as well as the overall sales for the day, from the customers that end up not purchasing anything." (Includes a 'Reply' button)
- Matthew Fling**: "A few ways to mitigate this problem would be to maybe pick up your morning routine of beverage or snack the evening before as to not be delayed to just one check out lane open. Also, they could have automated check out lanes open 24/7 so as to not impede anyone that running through on their way to work. This would also work out much better if the local retail store you stopped at had customer service policies to make the shoppers experience their top priority in keeping customers satisfied. Which would mean, if you have 20 checkout lanes and only 1 operating for 25 customers. Open additional lanes to eliminate the bottleneck and move customers through the checkout until there aren't anymore."
- Christina Southerland**: "I like your discussion. Walmart screams out in my head! I believe that if they took the average amount of customers they have per hour and make sure that they had the appropriate staff of cashiers to accommodate the flow of customers it would greatly improve sales and customer relations"
- Ryan Pendleton**: "Christopher, I agree I have noticed this bottleneck on many occasions. the hourly sales will drop. Places like Walmart, Aldi or any fast food place should look at their sales analytic and determine what time are the peeks hours of operation, that way they can see the hours they should staff more people and have more registers open."

At the bottom of the thread, there is a 'Select: All None' option.



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

The screenshot shows a discussion thread on a platform. The first post is by Jennifer Geiger, titled "Importance of Communicating Project Status". She discusses her role as a Lean trainer and the challenges of communicating with multiple project teams. She includes a link to an article: <https://www.leanmethods.com/resources/articles/reaching-people-effectively-communication-plans/>. Below her post is a "Reply" button.

The second post is by Mary Kinard, titled "RE: Importance of Communicating Project Status". She shares her experience with Lean projects and the frustration of downsizing committees. She suggests selecting employees with the most influence or those who benefit greatly from the project.

The third post is by Jennifer Geiger, titled "RE: Importance of Communicating Project Status". She thanks Mary for her experience with Lean!

The fourth post is by Mary Kinard, titled "TRE: Importance of Communicating Project Status".

FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying a Blackboard discussion board. The browser's address bar shows the URL: https://athens.blackboard.com/webapps/discussionboard/do/message?action=list_messages&course_id=_173207_1&nav=discussion_board&conf_id=_51363_1&forum_id=_157039_1&message_id=_3107784_1. The browser tab is titled "Thread: Importance of Communicating Project Status" and the user is identified as "Kim Roberts - Outlook Web".

The discussion board interface includes a left-hand navigation menu with the following items: Email Instructor, Instructor Information, Student Help & Services, My Grades, Learning Modules, Discussion Forum, Quizzes & Exams, Groups, Bb Collaborate Ultra, Faculty/Course Evaluation, Tools, and Bb Collaborate Sessions. Below these is a "Course Management" section with a "Control Panel" and various sub-items like Content, Course Tools, Evaluation, Grade Center, Users and Groups, Customization, Packages and Utilities, and Help.

The main content area displays a thread of messages:

- Jennifer Geiger** (4 months ago):
Importance of Communicating Project Status
One of my roles at Calhoun is that of Lean trainer and facilitator. Each Lean improvement project is made up of 10 to 12 team members, up to 3 sponsors, and in some instances additional stakeholders or subject matter experts. The team members are empowered by the project sponsors to not only propose improvements to the process they are working on but to actually implement those recommendations. Because of the size of the Lean teams and the complexity of the projects (and the fact that there are frequently multiple projects in process simultaneously), communicating with all the concerned parties is critical. To complicate matters further, each project sponsor has slightly different expectations regarding how often, in what manner, and for what purpose they want to be kept informed of the project's progress. Project sponsors, who are normally college vice presidents or deans, update the college president of the status of Lean projects weekly or as needed and must have a uniform way of capturing the project status and relaying that information.
<https://www.leanmethods.com/resources/articles/teaching-people-effectively-communication-plans/>
[Reply]
- Mary Kinard** (4 months ago):
RE: Importance of Communicating Project Status
I have been on several Lean projects and know the frustration you discuss. The solution we had for one project had a lot of people that were on the team with conflicts about the solution of saving time and money. I think a good resolution for the problem would be to downsize the committee to the ones that will have the most impact on the decisions. Sometimes the idea of having a lot of different ideas is a great thing, but forget that too many ideas is very confusing and frustrating.
I believe the solution to the problem would be to select only the employees that have the most influence or will benefit greatly from the changes. The College makes an effort for diversity when making a committee but sometimes there are some that do not actually know what is required for the job and are the ones that should come off the committee.
[Hide 2 replies]
- Jennifer Geiger** (4 months ago):
RE: Importance of Communicating Project Status
Thank you, Mary! I'd love to talk to you about your experience with Leant
[Hide 1 reply]
- Mary Kinard** (3 months ago):
TRE: Importance of Communicating Project Status
That would be great. I was on one that we evaluated the time and employees in IT department and instead of replacing two employees that left we actually plan to hire only one and reassign some duties to the new employee. I think this project went well. It was very productive with little arguing or misunderstandings.



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



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

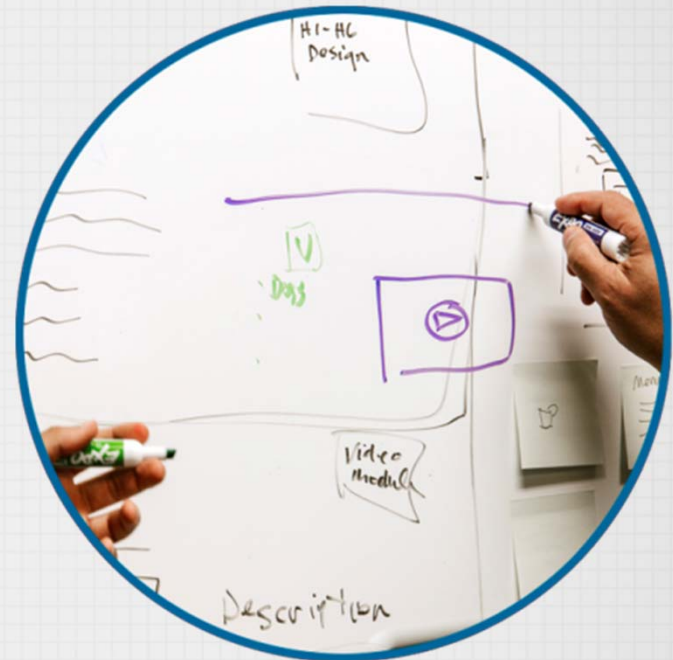


IMAGE SOURCES

- **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
 - Photo by [Priscilla Du Preez](#) on [Unsplash](#)
- **Slide 10:** Student Raising a Hand
 - Photo by [Nicole Honeywill](#) on [Unsplash](#)
- **Slide 11:** Person Typing on a Keyboard
 - Photo by [Kaitlyn Baker](#) on [Unsplash](#)
- **Slide 17:** Group of Men Talking
 - Photo by [Austin Distel](#) on [Unsplash](#)



QUESTIONS

