

Writing Substantive Online Discussion Posts: Strategies for Success

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Substantive initial postings must answer the discussion question directly and completely as well as make some contribution to the topic at hand. Response postings such as “I agree” or “Good job” with no elaboration are not considered substantive. Instead, explain *why* you agree or disagree. Elaborate, expand and engage. Below are some strategies to help you write a substantive post:

Elaborate

- Comment on a point made by a fellow classmate - This is a great strategy because it shows your instructor that you are reflecting on and synthesizing what your peers have written.
- Consider an idea being discussed and offer a different perspective on it.
- Describe an interesting idea from the week's reading, as it applies to the topic at hand, and explain what insights you gained from it.
- Link your post to course content.
- Provide examples from your professional and personal life experiences.

Expand

- Share a related experience or comment on others' experiences.
- Ask a thoughtful question.
- Solicit comments/opinions from your fellow classmates about your own post.
- Share another resource or provide an additional piece of information. Consider links to external articles and/or resources.

Engage

- Disagree (respectfully) or play the devil's advocate with a peer.
- Make connections. Look for similar ideas or experiences among your classmates' postings and draw conclusions.
- Acknowledge all responses to your posts from your peers and instructor.