



## Discussion Board Best Practices Guide

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## LEARNING THE JARGON

Attachments: Files (in their native file format such as .doc or .ppt) included with a message.

Forum: A mechanism to organize various discussions around different topics or kinds of discussion. Only an instructor/TA can create a new forum. The instructor can assign administrator privileges to a student within a forum.

Settings:

- allow anonymous posts
- allow author to edit message after posting
- allow author to remove own posts
- allow file attachments
- allow new threads

Options:

- Search a thread by author and keywords
- Sort messages by author, date, or subject
- Collect messages
- Mark Read/Unread
- Select/Unselect All
- Lock/Unlock a thread (instructor only)
- Remove messages (instructor only)
- Archive thread (instructor only)

Message: Also known as a post or posting. A message that is indented beneath another message indicates that it is in response to that message. To view a thread in expanded view, click the "+" - all the responses appear beneath the original message indented accordingly.

Threads: Include a message and all of the messages that are in response to it. Threads are displayed only showing the original message with the responses collapsed.

## PLANNING AHEAD

Advance planning pays off when it comes to conducting an asynchronous course or session. Following these steps can help.

### **Before the start of your stream/course:**

Consider how you will generally want to use forums in your stream/course. This includes:

- How do you plan to set up your forums and threads?
- Do you want them to be able to post anonymously? (Bb defaults to yes)
- Edit/delete their postings? (Bb defaults to no)
- Read but not post? (i.e. block)
- Use Groups function? (Note: Group Discussion Boards are under Groups not in regular Discussion Board area – if you use Groups function needs to be made clear to students)
- Start new threads? (Bb defaults to yes)
- Allow file attachments? (Bb defaults to yes)

### **At the start of your stream/course:**

1. Post a welcome and an overview of your stream/course.
2. Provide directions on how to use discussion board (as you would like them to use it in your stream/course).
3. Set expectations (i.e. forum participation, netiquette).

### **In advance of each major discussion board forum:**

1. Establish learning objectives (what you want your students to have learned by the end of the discussion).
2. Map out:
  - a. contact time (how much time per day should they be online? Should you?)
  - b. content (what general questions will you ask? These should relate to learning objectives.)
  - c. activities (will students break into groups? Will there be a debate? Will they take an online quiz/survey at any point? Will there be a deliverable at the conclusion of the discussion?)
  - d. flow (what kind of discussion do you want to have: cold-calling? Break into groups? When do you want to close discussions?)
3. Check that what you map out (in #2 above) will help students meet the learning objectives that you came up with (in #1 above). Modify learning objectives and/or lesson as needed.

### **At outset of each major discussion board forum:**

1. Post a welcome and an overview of session as well as expectations for forum participation (if they differ from general expectation set up at start of course).
2. Outline session flow to students. This includes degree of monitoring/participating you will have.
3. Communicate learning objectives.
4. Set expectations (for participation, netiquette, etc) for this session (if different from general expectations set above).
5. Post questions.

### **Over the course of each major discussion board forum:**

Monitor the discussions to:

- keep students on track
- maintain student engagement
- balance discussion (i.e. tone down the “loud talkers” and draw out the silent types)

Optional: Provide regular feedback (doesn't have to be graded), such as:

- checks for understanding: to make sure students are getting what they are supposed to
- just-in-time surveys: to check how things are going (anonymous)

**At the conclusion of each major discussion board forum:**

1. Provide a wrap-up of discussion.
2. Assign assessments/deliverables (if applicable).

## TYPES OF FORUMS

There are a lot of ways to teach a session using the discussion board. These straightforward approaches (based on faculty experience teaching in the Intel and fast Track hybrid MBA program) follow a traditional classroom model to discussing qualitative cases. At a basic level, faculty review their case content, learning objectives, comfort level with technology, and time allotted to an asynchronous session to make a series of decisions that lead to the delivery model that makes the most sense for them.

### Decision 1: Release questions all at once or sequentially?

- All at once: Questions are posted as a group at the beginning of a session rather than paced out over the course of a class session. This approach works well when it is not necessary to post questions in a time-released or sequential order. The key to success for this approach is to manage the session so the conversation moves forward and students stay engaged.
- Sequentially: Post questions one by one as the conversation unfolds. This approach works well when it is necessary to ask questions in a sequential order. This approach requires careful up-front planning by faculty and tight in-session orchestration by both faculty and students (i.e. all must log in to the discussion in a more regular timeframe than when questions are released all at once).

### Decision 2: Open session or cold-calling?

- Open session: Any student is welcome to respond to a posted question. This approach puts the student in an active role in his/her own learning; the student, not the faculty, selects which conversations to actively participate in.
- Cold-calling: Professor “cold calls” a particular student to respond to a question or another posting. Similar to the reasons for cold calling in the physical classroom, this approach is an effective way to draw out students and to keep the whole class engaged.

### Decision 3: Individual or group?

- Individual: Individual students post responses to questions and other postings. A key benefit of this approach is that it resembles a whole class conversation.
- Group: Class is broken into groups and groups discuss questions within their own group’s discussion area then post group response to the main forum area. The benefit of this approach is that each student more actively participates, albeit in small groups. Obviously, this approach is especially attractive when the class size is large.

## CREATING GROUPS

Some faculty like to begin a session in the main forum then assign specific question to groups to discuss in the group discussion board area. At the conclusion of the group conversation, a representative from the group posts the group's conclusions back to the main forum. A key benefit of this approach is that more students directly participate. It is also helpful in terms of forum management, especially with large classes. Some professors assign one question per group, while others assign all questions to all groups. This decision is usually driven by the content and faculty's session objectives. Both ways can be successful.

But enough about pedagogy. Let's get down to the brass tacks. From a technical standpoint, what needs to take place? Read on.

### To create a Group in Blackboard:

1. Go to Control Panel | User Management | Manage Groups.
2. Click on Add Group.
3. Type in the name of the group (mandatory) and a description (optional).
4. Select the features you want the group to be able to access:
  - a. Discussion Board: Allows only members of the group to participate in certain discussion forums.
  - b. Virtual Classroom: Allows only members of the group to participate in certain virtual chat sessions.
  - c. Group File Exchange: Allows group members to send files just to other members of
  - d. the group.
  - e. Group email: Enables group members to send email just to other members of the group.
  - f. Make Group Visible now?
    - Yes: You are ready for students to access the group pages
    - No: You don't want to allow access yet
5. Click Submit | OK.

### To modify Group properties:

1. Go to Control Panel | User Management | Manage Groups.
2. Click on the Modify button to the right of the Group to which you want to add users.
3. Click on Group Properties.
4. Modify the name of the group and the description.
5. Modify the features you want the group to be able to access:
  - a. Discussion Board: Allows only members of the group to participate in certain discussion
  - b. forums.
  - c. Virtual Classroom: Allows only members of the group to participate in certain virtual chat sessions.
  - d. Group File Exchange: Allows group members to send files just to other members of
  - e. the group.
  - f. Group email: Enables group members to send email just to other members of the group.
  - g. Make Group Visible now?
    - Yes: You are ready for students to access the group pages
    - No: You don't want to allow access yet
6. Click Submit | OK.

### To add users to a Group:

1. Go to Control Panel | User Management | Manage Groups.
2. Click on the Modify button to the right of the Group to which you want to add users.

3. Click on Add Users to Group.
4. Click on Search. This will list all the students in the class. (Alternative: To add users one by one, type in each user's last name in the Search box then click on Search.)
5. Click the box in the Add column to the left of the name of the user you would like to add.
6. Click Submit | OK.

**To remove users from a Group:**

1. Go to Control Panel | User Management | Manage Groups.
2. Click on the Modify button to the right of the Group from which you want to remove users.
3. Click on Remove Users from Group.
4. Click on Search. This will list all the students in the class. (Alternative: To remove users one by one, type in each user's last name in the Search box then click on Search.)
5. Click the box in the Remove column to the left of the name of the user you would like to remove.
6. Type Yes in the box.
7. Click Submit | OK.

## TYPES OF WRAPS

In a traditional classroom, faculty typically end the class session with a wrap, or summary of the class session. At times a student or group may be asked to provide the wrap. This summation approach works especially well in the asynchronous environment, as the class “session” has typically been drawn out over several days.

### Decision 1: Who does the wrap?

- Faculty: In an asynchronous session, the threads are often driven by the students, which is a good thing. Due to this possibility, though, many faculty embrace the chance to “take back the reins” and provide students with a summary of the session.
- Individual student: It can be a good exercise to call upon an individual student to review the session threads and summarize the session for classmates. This student-centered approach engages the student right up to the end of the session. Of course, the challenge is that the student provides an accurate wrap; sometimes a faculty member will provide closing thoughts after the official wrap.
- Group wrap: Especially when the session used group work, ending the session with a wrap by a group can be effective. Similar to the student wrap, the group work engages the student right up to the end of the session, but again the faculty member may want to post closing thoughts post-wrap.

### Decision 2: What type of wrap?

- Text posting right in forum: This straightforward approach is probably most widely used, regardless of who does the wrap. A key benefit is that the closing comments are in the same format (forum thread) as the session discussion.
- Word attachment to forum thread: This approach is similar to posting a wrap right in the forum. The main benefit of this approach is when someone wants to write a longer wrap or take advantage of the features that Word provides (spell check, tables, lists, font size/color, and so on) and/or to copy/paste from other documents. Note that this type of attachment wrap does not have to be in Word; you can also attach a .pdf, an Excel spreadsheet, or some other file.
- Audio file attached to forum thread: This approach is attractive to those who might otherwise be bogged down by the crafting of a written wrap. Typically, a faculty member comes to the Faculty Innovation Studio to record the file and a CITG team member posts the audio file as an attachment. Students do need a sound card and speakers/headset in order to access the file. The files need to be no more than two-three minutes in length, so sometimes multiple files are necessary. For review purposes, listening to an audio file rather than skimming a posting or Word document can be tedious. Last, it should be noted that posting an audio file without an accompanying transcript does not meet section 508 standards regarding disabilities compliance.
- Breeze presentation attached to forum thread: A Breeze presentation (created with a simple tool to add audio to a PowerPoint presentation) is another attachment option. The PowerPoint feature allows faculty to use pre-existing PowerPoints and provides more flexibility than a purely text-based wrap. The audio aspect seems less time-consuming to create, although many have found the most impactful audio portions are preceded by script-writing. Note that a Breeze presentation carries the same audio caveats as the audio file attachment (see above).



## TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS/SKILL SET

Among the blended delivery options that Babson features, Blackboard's discussion board is the most user-friendly, low-risk, and easy to master. At a basic level, faculty and students need:

- Basic technology experience/comfort level
- Basic understanding of Blackboard
- Internet access (high-speed preferred)
- PC (not Mac)
- Flexible mindset and open attitude. After all, "technology happens."

### ITSD Support Center

While CITG is available to teach faculty how to use the tools and teach using the tools, once the course has launched, the ITSD support center should be the primary contact point for technical issues associated with Blackboard, Centra, and PictureTel. They are available at 781-239-4357 (HELP), [support@babson.edu](mailto:support@babson.edu), or in Horn Library room 220. For current hours, please visit their Web site at <http://www3.babson.edu/offices/itsd/>

## NETIQUETTE

“Netiquette” is shorthand for “Internet etiquette.”

While we are all familiar with standard manners and ways of communicating when it comes to face-to-face discussion, in online discussion sometimes these basic communication guidelines are forgotten. Let the following list be a guide as you participate in online discussions.

1. Be polite!
2. Sarcasm does not always work well online. If you are kidding, a ☺ or a “lol” (stands for “laugh out loud”) can be helpful.
3. Avoid all caps. In the online world, ALL CAPS MEANS YOU ARE YELLING.
4. Be selective in your postings, and be sure to leave room for others to post as well. Reading and thinking about other people’s postings is as meaningful as posting.
5. Follow professor guidelines for participation.
6. Stick to more universal shorthand (such as y for “why” and k for “okay”). More obscure acronyms might not be as widely understood.
7. Discussion board conversation can be less formal than other types of writing for a course. (Think of it as more like a phone call than a letter.) Typographical errors are more forgivable. Don’t sweat the small stuff!
8. Think before you post. One of the great things about Discussion Boards is that they are asynchronous. Take advantage of this feature!
9. If you are confused or need more explanation, post a question. If you need help, it is likely that others do as well.
10. Keep forum conversation limited to topic at hand. If you go too far off topic, know that your professor (and possibly your classmates!) will bring you back on track.

**DIRECTIONS FOR STUDENTS: POSTING ON BLACKBOARD'S DISCUSSION BOARD**

1. Click on Discussion Board button.
2. Click on the discussion forum that you want to participate in.
3. To:
  - a. start a new thread, click on Add New Thread.
  - b. reply to a thread, click on the message, then click on Reply.
4. Create your message.
5. Click on Submit.

Note: Students can not add new forums but can create new threads. In order to create a new forum, students must ask instructor to do so.

## FORUM PLANNING GUIDE

**Name of discussion forum:**

*Name from syllabus, name of case/activity, main forum name?*

**Type of discussion forum:**

- *Release questions all at once or sequentially?*
- *Open session or cold-calling?*
- *Individual or groups?*

**Length of forum:**

- *Start date/time:*
- *End date time:*

**Expected student participation:**

- *I will call on you.*
- *Everyone must post at least x per day/week.*
- *Work in groups with spokesperson back to main forum.*
- *Check the forums x times per day/week.*
- *I will close certain questions/entire forum at [a set point]. After that time, no more postings [instructor can set in Bb].*
- *You will be expected to [post attachment/complete exercise/provide wrap-up etc.]*

*Decide how much they should participate and let them know. This may be a start of stream/course info or vary depending on forum.*

**Estimated professor participation:**

- *I will read/respond x times per day/week.*
- *I will be online a lot.*
- *I will call on people.*

*Decide how much you will participate and let them know. This may be a start of stream/course info or vary depending on forum.*

**Additional work required:**

- *Reading*
- *Answer questions*
- *Interview someone*
- *Exercise*
- *Work in group*

*This may be a start of stream/course info or vary depending on forum.*

**Deliverable:**

- *Quiz*
- *Survey*
- *Project*
- *Paper*
- *Exam*

*This may be a start of stream/course info or vary depending on forum.*



## Forum Approaches

(based on Fast Track 2 mod 3)

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## Introduction

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While there are many different ways to hold a successful discussion board forum, for Fast Track, use of cold-calling and use of groups are strongly encouraged. This inclination is based both on best learning and on forum management for the large (50 person) cohort. Of course, at the end of the day, it is your content for your stream that you are teaching and therefore up to you.

This document includes actual forum assignments from Fast Track 2 mod 3. The assignments have been broken into seven approaches. Each section contains a brief overview of the approach then several examples of the approach used in both quantitative and qualitative streams. There is also a section on [decision points for forum planning](#).

If you would like to learn more about any of the above approaches, talk through planning, expectation-setting, and forum management, or try out a completely different approach, contact Kristin Lofblad at [klofblad@babson.edu](mailto:klofblad@babson.edu) or x5834.

## **Approaches at a glance**

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### **Approach: whole class open forum**

This approach seems the most straightforward in terms of planning and delivery: post each discussion question as its own thread in the forum. Students review all postings and reply to some postings. This approach is appropriate when questions do not need to be released in sequential order. The danger is that hosting your forum this way can lead to over-posting, including posts like “I agree!” rather than thoughtful responses. The key to success is careful monitoring and setting clear expectations with students. As a last resort, you can use Blackboard discussion board options to lock down a thread or block an overzealous contributor.

### **Approach: whole class open forum in parts**

This approach is similar in its benefits and drawbacks to the standard [whole class open forum](#). The main difference is that by breaking the forum into two or more parts, students and faculty have interim deadlines/end points. This approach is suitable when one conversation needs to be complete before the second can begin. Note that the more parts a session has, it can lose some of its asynchronous qualities, as students may need to log in at more specific dates and times.

### **Approach: cold calling groups**

If your content lends itself to it, this approach can lead to a very positive and hands-on learning experience for the student while providing a sustainable degree of forum management for the professor. Note that you need to set very clear expectations about where to go when with your students. The session typically begins in the main forum, then students chat in their group forums before returning to the main forum to post results and read peer results.

### **Approach: cold calling individuals**

This approach is similar in its benefits and drawbacks to [cold calling groups](#), with the obvious difference being you cold call individuals rather than groups. This removes a layer of forum management (students don't need to leave main forum for groups forum and return to main forum). On the other hand, you lose out on the group conversation resulting in the group posting.

### **Approach: mix of assignment and forum**

While professors usually use forums for discussions, you can also use a forum as a way for your students to post information from an activity, turn in assignments, and so on. Combining an activity or assignment with a forum conversation can also work well. Again, the secret to success is up-front planning, setting clear expectations, and solid forum management.

### **Approach: skipping forum for self-study**

While the majority of distance sessions use the forum in some capacity, there is no rule saying you have to. Sometimes, an offline activity meets your session objectives better than a forum would.

### **Approach: mix of whole class and group forums**

Once you get the hang of planning, expectation-setting, and forum management, you can begin to look at forum planning as a series of items on a distance learning a la carte menu. Mix it up! Some whole class forum, some group forum. Some cold calling, some open responses. Tie in an activity, provide some of the solutions with the problems, and see what happens. You can even spread a session over two weeks if you want to. (Make sure the mod map and syllabus reflects this one!)

## Decision points in forum planning

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When planning your forum, important items to bear in mind include:

1. Your content/objectives: What does your content/objectives lend themselves toward? How many days do you need to facilitate a forum successfully? Do you even need a forum? Would groups be helpful or add an unnecessary layer of complexity? How much conversation do your discussion questions typically generate? Is your content suitable for a debate? For cold calling?
2. Other streams running that week: How many other streams are running during that week? Do any have firm deliverable deadlines or an intense period of time? This might help you determine when you want your forum to start/end and/or what interim deliverables (if any) you might ask for.
3. Your schedule: What else do you have going on that week? Are you traveling or otherwise out of touch for any periods?
4. Your teaching style: Do you prefer cold calling? Do you like multi-part activities? Do you have any problem releasing the possible response with the problem?
5. Your technology skill/interest: Have you taught using discussion board before? What worked/didn't work for you/your content in the past? How much access will you have to high-speed internet during this week?

Once you have figured out the above, it is time to get down to brass tacks of session planning.

Consider the following:

1. Determine objectives for forum.
2. Determine assignment/discussion questions.
3. Whole class or groups?
4. Open forum or cold calling?
5. If cold calling, determine who gets cold called when.
6. What other streams/deliverables take place this week? From this information as well as based on your assignment/objectives, determine length of forum.
7. If there is a student deliverable, determine due date.
8. If you are posting a wrap, determine posting date.

Sketching out your week can help:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday



**Key to syllabus forum assignment sections**[back to top](#)

*Note: If you can not see anything on this page, go to View and select Print Layout.*

<b>Stream/session</b>	<b>SCS-1</b>
<b>Start/end</b>	Start: Monday, 08/30/04 End: Saturday, 09/04/04
<b>Overview</b>	Answer the discussion questions below in preparation for related forum discussion. Schedule is as follows:
<b>Delivery schedule/instructions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Monday: Groups 1, 2, 3: Be prepared for cold-calling in forum.</li><li>Wednesday: Group 4, 5, 6, 7: Be prepared for cold-calling in forum.</li><li>Friday: Group 8, 9, 10: Be prepared for cold-calling in forum.</li></ul>
<b>Questions</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Identify the products, markets and trends in the industry served by Seligram.</li><li>2. Draw a process flow for the production process(es).</li><li>3. Cost the five products using each of the cost systems: old, new proposed by accountant, and new proposed by consultant.</li><li>4. Which would you support and why?</li><li>5. What caused the old system to become obsolete?</li><li>6. How will the addition of the new testing machine affect your answer?</li></ol>

**Approach: whole class open forum**  
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This approach seems the most straightforward in terms of planning and delivery: post each discussion question as its own thread in the forum. Students review all postings and reply to some postings. This approach is appropriate when questions do not need to be released in sequential order. The danger is that hosting your forum this way can lead to over-posting, including posts like “I agree!” rather than thoughtful responses. The key to success is careful monitoring and setting clear expectations with students. As a last resort, you can use Blackboard discussion board options to lock down a thread or block an overzealous contributor.

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**AV-2**

Start: Thursday, 09/23/04  
End: Saturday, 09/25/04

Answer the questions below in preparation for related forum discussion. Schedule is as follows:

- Thursday-Friday: Participate in related forum discussion.
  - Saturday: Read professor wrap-up.
1. Formulate a principle of whistle-blowing that clearly outlines the specific qualities or properties a situation must have in order to justify a good faith whistle-blowing. How will you justify this principle? How can it be defended (v. opposing principles) using the Four Tests? Can you give a defensible argument in support of it?
  2. Apply your principle to the Challenger case. In using your principle, when might someone have been justified in blowing the whistle? Is there a point at which you think anyone was obliged to do so? Why (or why not)?

*Notes: It is likely, given the size of the class, that I will invite a few of you to post your assignment responses to start discussion.*

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**TOM-6**

Start: Monday, 09/20/04  
End: Friday, 09/24/04

Answer the questions below in preparation for related forum discussion. Schedule is as follows:

- Monday-Wednesday: Participate in related forum discussion.
  - Friday: Read professor wrap-up.
1. What major design decisions affected overall quality of the Challenger project?
  2. Apply appropriate basic QC tools to this case.
  3. How could you apply a cost of quality framework to this situation?
  4. What could have been done differently?

**ISM-5**

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Start: Monday, 10/18/04

End: Saturday, 10/23/04

Answer the questions below in preparation for related forum discussion:

1. Stepping back, at the very end of the case Girard Liberty says, "We certainly don't want to find ourselves back where we were in 1992!" How would you characterize that (1992) situation?
2. How did Welch's get into this 'IT mess' and how do they avoid a 'relapse' in the future?
3. Describe and evaluate the steps Girard Liberty took after becoming CIO. What were the outcomes, in terms of IT architecture, the role and structure of the IT organization, and the role of the CIO? Can you relate these outcomes to the various dimensions of "Information Orientation"?
4. What should Girard Liberty do with respect to the two challenges he describes on the last page of the case: 1) Maintaining contact with line management; 2) Ensuring an appropriate level of IT investment.
5. In addition to the two challenges mentioned explicitly above (#4), what other issues might Girard Liberty face going forward and how should he respond to them?

**Approach: whole class open forum in parts**  
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This approach is similar in its benefits and drawbacks to the standard [whole class open forum](#). The main difference is that by breaking the forum into two or more parts, students and faculty have interim deadlines/end points. This approach is suitable when one conversation needs to be complete before the second can begin. Note that the more parts a session has, it can lose some of its asynchronous qualities, as students may need to log in at more specific dates and times.

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**SCS-8**

Start: Monday, 11/15/04  
End: Thursday, 11/18/04

Answer the questions in the case in preparation for related forum discussion. Schedule is as follows:

- Monday-Tuesday: Participate in related forum discussion (part 1).
- Wednesday-Thursday: Participate in related forum discussion (part 2).

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**TOM-16**

Start: Monday, 11/29/04  
End: Saturday, 12/4/04

Answer the discussion questions below in preparation for related forum discussion:

- Monday-Thursday: Participate in related forum discussion (part 1).
  - Thursday-Friday: Participate in related forum discussion (part 2).
  - Friday-Saturday: Participate in related forum discussion (part 3).
1. What are the key reasons for the high quality that is perceived by the patients of Shouldice Hospital?
  2. What is the bottleneck in the Shouldice system? (Assume that operations are performed five days per week, the average stay is 3.5 days, each doctor can perform 4 operations per day, and the surgeon's day ends at 4:00pm.)
  3. Dr. Shouldice is considering a number of options for future growth. This includes Saturday operations, a second hospital, performing other surgeries, and expanding the facility in Canada. What would you recommend?

**Approach: cold calling in groups**[back to top](#)

If your content lends itself to it, this approach can lead to a very positive and hands-on learning experience for the student while providing a sustainable degree of forum management for the professor. Note that you need to set very clear expectations about where to go when with your students. The session typically begins in the main forum, then students chat in their group forums before returning to the main forum to post results and read peer results.

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**SCS-1**

Start: Monday, 08/30/04

End: Friday, 09/03/04

Answer the discussion questions below in preparation for related forum discussion. Schedule is as follows:

- Monday: Groups 1, 2, 3: Be prepared for cold-calling in forum.
  - Wednesday: Group 4, 5, 6, 7: Be prepared for cold-calling in forum.
  - Friday: Group 8, 9, 10: Be prepared for cold-calling in forum.
1. Identify the products, markets and trends in the industry served by Seligram.
  2. Draw a process flow for the production process(es).
  3. Cost the five products using each of the cost systems: old, new proposed by accountant, and new proposed by consultant.
  4. Which would you support and why?
  5. What caused the old system to become obsolete?
  6. How will the addition of the new testing machine affect your answer?

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**ODP-5**

Start: Monday, 10/11/04

End: Saturday, 10/16/04

Complete the reading and answer your group's discussion questions in preparation for related forum discussion. Schedule is as follows:

- Monday: Group 5: Be prepared to answer questions in forum.
  - Wednesday: Group 4: Be prepared to answer questions in forum.
  - Friday: Groups 1-2: Be prepared to answer questions in forum.
  - Saturday: Group 3: Post summary
1. What are Amelia Rogers' most pressing problems?
  2. What are the underlying causes of the problems she is facing?
  3. How would you explain the approach and behavior of each of the protagonists?
  4. What should be Rogers' action plan for solving the problem(s)? What "currencies" might Rogers offer to Burns to gain his cooperation?
  5. So what does all of this mean in regards to working in teams? What insights can you draw about cross-functional teams and business performance?

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**DSS-10**

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Start: Thursday, 10/28/04

End: Saturday, 10/30/04

Answer the discussion questions below in preparation for related forum discussion. Schedule is as follows:

- Thursday: Groups 1, 3, 5, 7, 9: Be prepared to answer questions in forum.
  - Saturday: Groups 2, 4, 6, 8, 10: Post replies and wrap up forum.
1. What is the optimal purchase schedule for Mr. Ringo?
  2. Does the operation have any slack?
  3. Does it make sense to sort the junk rags?
  4. Does it make sense to process junk rags at all?
  5. What insights could Ringo's management derive from the utilization of LP modeling?

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**SCS-5**

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Start: Monday, 10/11/04

End: Saturday, 10/16/04

Answer the questions in the Manzana supplement in preparation for related forum discussion. Schedule is as follows:

- Monday: Group 9, 10: Be prepared to answer questions in forum.
- Wednesday: Group 6, 7, 8: Be prepared to answer questions in forum.
- Friday: Groups 3, 4, 5: Be prepared to answer questions in forum.
- Saturday: Group 1, 2: Post summary.

**Approach: cold calling individuals**[back to top](#)

This approach is similar in its benefits and drawbacks to [cold calling groups](#), with the obvious difference being you cold call individuals rather than groups. This removes a layer of forum management (students don't need to leave main forum for groups forum and return to main forum). On the other hand, you lose out on the group conversation resulting in the group posting.

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**ODP-4**

Start: Tuesday, 09/14/04

End: Friday, 09/17/04

Answer the discussion questions below in preparation for related forum discussion. Schedule is as follows:

- Tuesday: Check forum for cold calling to individuals.
  - Wednesday: Participate in forum.
  - Thursday: Check forum for professor wrap-up questions.
  - Friday: Participate in wrap-up forum.
1. Why is the Eagle team working with such commitment?
  2. To what extent has Tom West's approach provided the team's motivation? How about the organizational context and the competitive situation faced by DG at this time?
  3. Would you be motivated to work like the Eagle team under these circumstances? How sustainable is such effort?
  4. In your work experience, what has motivated you to make such extraordinary effort? Please fill out the self-assessment form and post to Blackboard in preparation for related discussion.

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**MVC-4**

Start: Wednesday, 09/29/04

End: Saturday, 10/02/04

Answer the case questions. Be prepared to post your solutions to the forum. Schedule is as follows:

- Wednesday: Check the forum for the names of team members who have been designated to post their solutions.
- Thursday: Check forum for follow-up questions.
- Friday: Participate in related forum.
- Saturday: Read professor wrap-up.

**Approach: mix of assignment and forum**  
[back to top](#)

While professors usually use forums for discussions, you can also use a forum as a way for your students to post information from an activity, turn in assignments, and so on. Combining an activity or assignment with a forum conversation can also work well. Again, the secret to success is up-front planning, setting clear expectations, and solid forum management.

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**TOM-5**

Start: Monday, 09/13/04  
End: Saturday, 09/18/04

Due Monday: Check the forum for “beer game” URL posting. Schedule is as follows:

- Monday-Friday: Play the beer game online with your team. Post daily team results to the forum.
- Saturday: Read professor wrap-up forum posting.

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**AV-1**

Start: Monday, 09/13/04  
End: Saturday, 09/18/04

Complete the assignment below with your group. Schedule is as follows:

- Monday-Wednesday: Work on the group assignment.
  - Due Wednesday: Post your group's completed assignment to the forum.
  - Wednesday-Saturday: Participate in the related forum discussion.
1. Read case study and develop an action plan for discussion with your group.
  2. In your group, select two contrasting action plans that you developed individually for the Slade Plating Department case. Discuss and note the reasons that are used to justify each plan. Some further discussion of underlying justifications for the reason themselves may be necessary as well. Note which reasons pass and/or fail the Four Tests. Then note any other relevant arguments, objections, and discussion points.
  3. Check out the other groups' plans, and post at least one question (per group) for each of the other study groups.
  4. Check out the other groups' plans, and post at least one question (per group) for each of the other study groups.
  5. Participate in threaded discussions on each groups' plans.

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**DSS-3**

Start: Monday, 09/20/04  
End: Friday, 09/24/04

Complete the [assignment](#) in preparation for related forum discussion. Schedule is as follows:

- Monday: Check forum for cold call announcement.
- Tuesday-Friday: Be prepared for cold-calling in forum.



- Friday: Read professor solution (located in Course Documents | DSS) and participate in forum wrap-up.

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**LAW-2**

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Start: Monday, 10/11/04

End: Saturday, 10/16/04

Complete the assignment below. Schedule is as follows:

- Monday-Friday: Work on the assignment.
- Friday: Post assignment to the forum.
- Saturday: Read professor wrap-up.

Review your current employment agreement if you have a written one. Make a sanitized copy (purged of compensation information or other sensitive matters) to share with the rest of your team. In general, is everyone in your group an employee "at will"? Does anyone have an employee handbook that changes that? Is the non-disclosure agreement clear? Is the non-compete agreement, if any, enforceable? How are disputes to be resolved? Work with your team to complete this assignment and post your response (no more than 500 words) to the forum.

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**LAW-3**

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Start: Monday, 11/01/04

End: Saturday, 11/06/04

Consider the Ford/Firestone case study. Based on the facts stated in the case, are you able to determine whether the Ford SUV is defectively designed by balancing: risk and utility, feasible safer alternative, cost of alternative design, and use of warnings and instructions? Work with your team to answer this question and post your response, not longer than 500 words, to the forum. Schedule is as follows:

- Monday-Friday: Work on the assignment.
- Friday: Post assignment to the forum.
- Saturday: Read professor wrap-up.

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**TOM-14/DSS-11**

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Start: Monday, 10/25/04

End: Friday, 10/29/04

Skim the Award Criteria and complete the related [mini-assessment](#) in preparation for related forum discussion. Schedule is as follows:

- Monday: Post assessment.
- Tuesday-Friday: Participate in Forum

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**AV-3**

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Start: Wednesday, 10/13/04

End: Saturday, 10/16/04

Complete the assignment outlined below. Schedule is as follows:

- Wednesday: Complete steps 1-2 of the assignment.
  - Thursday: Complete step 3 of the assignment.
  - Friday-Saturday: Complete steps 4-5 of the assignment.
  - Saturday: Post your group's completed action plan from step 5 of the assignment.
1. Dynamo Case Action Plan: Think about what Rosa Alvarez in the Dynamo Case might do in this situation and formulate an action plan outline.
  2. Personal Narrative: Draft a narrative describing a situation that you participated in or observed at work that raised issues of diversity, and submit it to your group for review.
  3. Outside Discussion: Find friends inside or outside of your workplace with whom you share similar qualities. Discuss how you feel that others perceive people like you, as well as any diversity concerns you might have as a group. Summarize the insights you gain from this discussion for your group.
  4. Group Work: Meet with your group to discuss your personal narratives and the results of your outside discussions. Use these to formulate principles for dealing with diversity issues. Review each other's original Dynamo Case action plans to determine if there are changes you could make given what you learned in steps 3 and 4.
  5. Group Action Plan: Formulate a group action plan (or two plans, if you cannot agree) that:
    - a. Relates your group's "diversity principles" back to the original case
    - b. Includes a response summarizing the effects of this assignment on your original action plans.
    - c. If invited, post your group's action plans to the forum.

*Notes: We will also discuss "A Marriage Proposal" online.*

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**SCS-7**

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Start: Tuesday, 10/26/04

End: Saturday, 10/30/04

Prepare a cost analysis for each of the five different purchased items. Suggested steps are listed below. Schedule is as follows:

- Tuesday: Post to forum.
  - Wednesday: Read professor responses.
  - Saturday: participate in forum wrap-up.
1. Calculate average revenue per pound, by grade.
  2. Calculate weighted average revenue per pound for each source.
  3. Calculate raw material cost per pound sold, for each source.
  4. Calculate direct labor cost per pound sold for a. grading b. cutting | consider yields carefully.
  5. Calculate packing cost (labor and material) per pound sold.
  6. Calculate variable overhead per pound sold for the junk source.

**Approach: skipping the forum for self-study**  
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While the majority of distance sessions use the forum in some capacity, there is no rule saying you have to. Sometimes, an offline activity meets your session objectives better than a forum would.

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### **MVC-3**

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Start: Monday, 09/20/04

End: Saturday, 09/25/04

Review the topic overview then complete the [PV exercise](#). When you are ready, check your work against the [professor solution](#).

**Approach: mix of whole class and group forums**[back to top](#)

Once you get the hang of planning, expectation-setting, and forum management, you can begin to look at forum planning as a series of items on a distance learning a la carte menu. Mix it up! Some whole class forum, some group forum. Some cold calling, some open responses. Tie in an activity, provide some of the solutions with the problems, and see what happens. You can even spread a session over two weeks if you want to. (Make sure the mod map and syllabus reflects this one!)

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**SCS-3**

Start: Monday, 09/20/04

End: Saturday, 09/25/04

Answer questions from the case in preparation for related forum discussion. Schedule is as follows:

- Monday: Groups 1, 2 and 10: Be prepared to answer questions in forum.
- Tuesday: Groups 3, 4: Be prepared to answer questions in forum.
- Wednesday: Groups 5, 6: Be prepared to answer questions in forum.
- Thursday: Groups 7, 8, 9: Be prepared to answer questions in forum.
- Friday-Saturday: All: Participate in whole class forum.
- Saturday: Participate in forum wrap-up

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**SCS-4**

Start: Tuesday, 09/28/04

End: Saturday, 10/02/04

Answer the questions in the case in preparation for related forum discussion. Schedule is as follows:

- Tuesday: Groups 5, 6, 7: Be prepared to answer questions in forum.
- Wednesday: Read professor solution.
- Thursday-Friday: All: Participate in related forum discussion.
- Saturday: Read professor wrap-up