Brightspace Discussions and Groups Workshop Exercises

Log into brightspace.uwindsor.ca. Use your Sandbox course site to complete these exercises.

A discussion **forum** is equivalent to a folder which contains a collection of one or more discussion **topics**. You post to discussion **topics** and each new post within the topic is called a **thread**. **Replies** to posts are part of the thread.

Exercise 1 – Create a discussion forum

Use forums to organize your discussion topics into categories. Your course can have multiple forums and topics, but you must create a forum before you can create a topic since all topics belong to forums.

1. On the navbar, click **Discussions**.
2. On the **Discussions List** page, click the **New** button and in the drop-down menu, click **New Forum**.
3. Enter a title for your new forum.
4. Enter a description for your new forum. (optional)

5. In the **Options** section, do not check any of the options. For this exercise, select options at the topic level instead. Also, wait to set **Restrictions** at the Topics level. Click **Save and Close**.

Exercise 2 - Create a discussion topic

1. In the **Discussions List** tab, click **New** and select **New Topic**.

2. In the **Propertie**s tab, click **Choose a Forum** and select the forum you just created above.

3. If you have previously set up groups in your course, you will see the option **Topic Type**. If you do, leave the default **Open topic, everyone can access this topic and its contents**. If you have not set up groups, you will not see this option.

4. Type *Week 1* for the **Title**.

5. In the **Description**, add the instructions for your students. It can be a question, a case study to discuss, an image to critique, etc.

6. In the **Options** section, select **A moderator must approve individual posts before they display in the forum**:

   a. **Allow anonymous posts** - To enable users to post anonymously to their peers. Instructors will still be able to see the author of posts. Anonymous posts display with the author "Anonymous" in the thread.

   b. **Users must start a thread before they can read and reply to other threads in each topic** – "Must post to participate" Selecting this option will require a user to start a new thread in a topic before viewing or replying to other threads in that topic in the forum. If this forum requires moderator approval, users will not be able to view or reply to other threads until their thread is approved.
   This option cannot be selected alongside the "Allow anonymous posts" option.

   c. **A moderator must approve individual posts before they display in the forum** - To ensure that posts are approved by a moderator before they display in the forum.

7. In the **Restrictions** tab leave the **Hide from Users** unchecked unless you want to manually edit this topic later and remove the checkmark when students should access it. Select the **Visible with submission restricted after end** option in the **Availability** options.

> **Visible with access restricted before start/end.** The forum is visible to learners before or after the start or end date, but they cannot access it.

> **Visible with submission restricted before start/end.** The forum is visible to learners before or after the start or end date and they can access it, but they cannot post new threads or replies. This effectively makes a discussion read-only.

> **Hidden before start/end.** The forum is hidden from learners until the start or end date. Calendar events for Availability Start and Availability End are hidden until the start or end date. Notifications are also not sent until the start or end date.

8. Click the **Assessment** tab.

9. If you have already created a grade item in the gradebook for this discussion you can select it from the **Choose a grade item** drop down. If you haven't created a grade item in the gradebook already, click **New Grade Item**.
For this exercise, click **New Grade Item**, name it **Discussion 1** and click **Save**.

10. Enter the maximum score that can be earned for this discussion topic in the **Score Out Of** box.

11. If you have a rubric, attach it by clicking **Add Rubric** and select the rubric from the list, and click **Add Selected**.

12. Click **Save and Close**.

Exercise 3 – Post/Create a thread

1. On the **Discussions List** page, click the name of the topic in which you created above.
2. Click **Start a New Thread**.

3. Type in a subject (which will appear as a title to your post) in the **Enter a subject** field.
4. Enter your post in the text box. You can use the Brightspace html editor to format the text and/or add multimedia to the post if you want.
5. The **Subscribe to this thread** option is checked by default so that you will be notified in the **Subscription Alerts** icon in the mini navbar when someone replies to your post. Leave it checked unless you do not want a notification. (If you selected the **Discussions** option under **Instant**

Notifications in your general **Notifications** setting under your profile card, you will also receive an email.)

6. You may add attachments and when ready, click **Post**.

Exercise 4 – Assess discussions

1. On the **Discussions List** page, click the contextual arrow on the right of the topic's name and select **Assess Topic**. Note: the Assess Topic option only appears if you have linked the topic to a grade item.
2. The **Assess Topic** page displays. Navigate to the learner you want to evaluate and click **Topic Score** under their name to assign a grade.


3. If using a rubric, click the rubric and select the appropriate levels for each criterion. If not using a rubric, enter the grade in the **Overall Grade** box. You can also override the rubric-calculated score by clicking the **Overall Grade** box and change its value.
4. Provide the leaner with additional feedback, if you want.
5. When you are ready, click **Save Draft**. You are returned to the Assess Topics page.

6. When you are ready to publish (give the students their grades and feedback) select all the students in the list and select **Publish**.
Note: if you have more students than appear on the page, you will need to scroll to the next page and select and publish those separately.
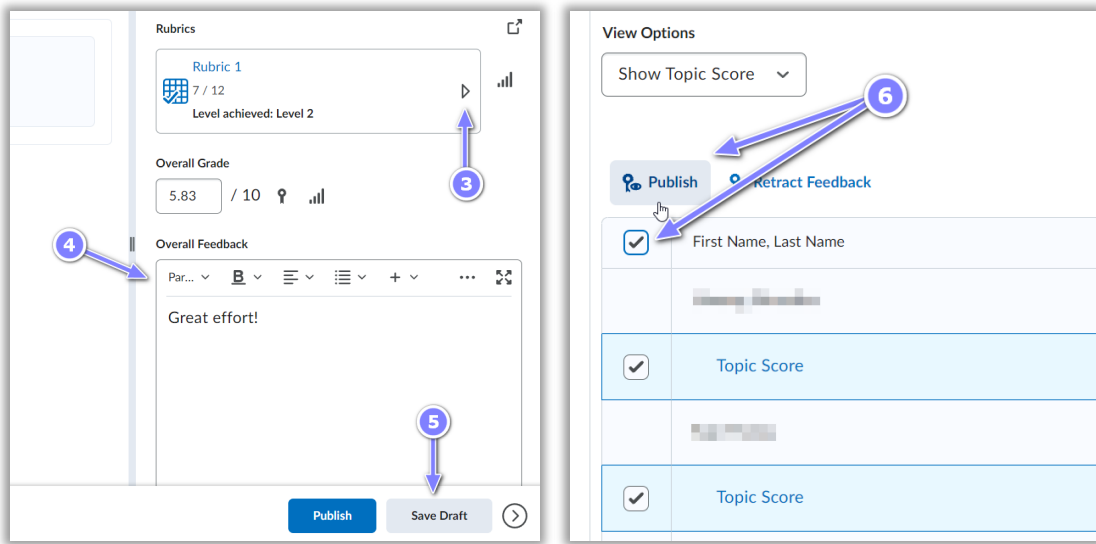
Exercise 5 - Create groups

1. In the Navbar, click **Course tools** and select **Groups** from the list.
2. On the **Manage Groups** page, click **New Category**.
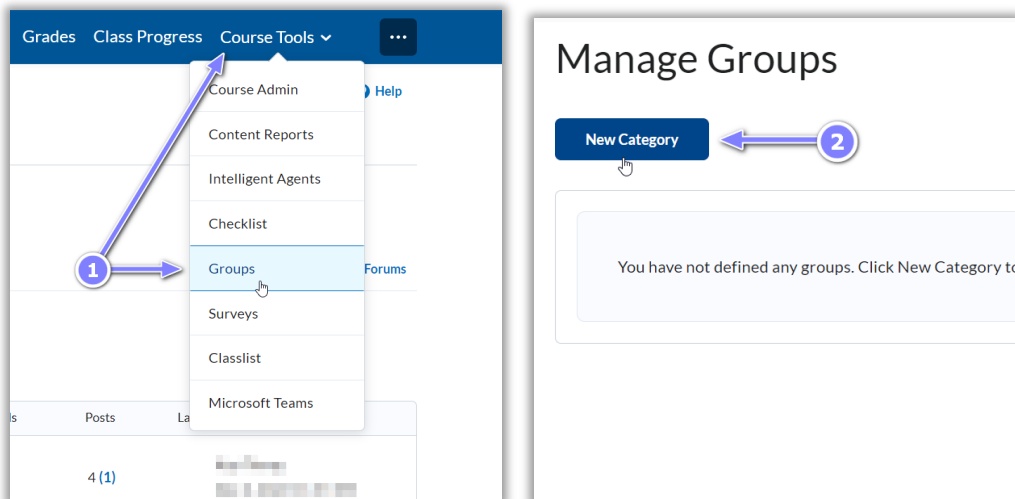
3. Enter a **Category Name** (ex. Group Assignments) and optional **Description.**
4. Select an **Enrollment Type** from the drop-down list (ex. Groups of #).

- **# of Groups – No Auto Enrollments** for a specified number of groups, add any number of users
- **Groups of #** for the minimum number of groups needed to place users in groups of a max size.
- **# of Groups** for a specific number of groups (Auto-Enroll or Manual)
- **Groups of # - Self Enrollment** for a specified number of groups, which users choose from.

- **# of Groups, Capacity of # - Self Enrollment** for a specified number of groups with a specified number of enrollments each. Users choose a group.
- **Single user, member-specific groups** for groups with a single user where the name of the learner is the name of the group.

5. Enter the **Number of Users** per group (ex. 3 per group). (This option will change depending on the Enrollment Type you choose.)
6. To apply a distinctive prefix to each group name and code in the category, enter it in the **Group Prefix** field. For example, "Team" if you don't want "Group". If you do not fill in this field, the prefix defaults to "Group".
7. Select **Auto-enroll new users** so new students will automatically be added to a group when they register for the course.
8. Select **Randomize users in groups so the group membership is randomized** rather than placed in groups by their alphabetical placement on the Classlist.

9. Under **Additional Options**, click **Set up discussion areas**. This will set up a Discussion Item that only group members can use. The instructor can also view and participate in the discussion. Click **New Forum** and **Title** it *Group Work*. Click **Save**.

10. Click **Save** and **OK** in the pop up that appears.

11. Select **Create one topic per group** and select **Create and Next** then **Done**.

12. Click on **Group 1** and enter a new name for the group (ex. Social Media Scenario group)
13. Click **Save**.