Students' Guide to Creating a Learning Community Through Social Media

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1. Introduction

This short guide will help you to understand the goals behind our online Yammer community so that you can be a good moderator. Being a moderator is a valuable skill that you can use in the future to develop another online community. Please read this guide carefully and use it to help you when you moderate. Be sure to take it out and review it before posting so that you can be a strategic moderator. As a moderator, you will be expected to host the community space for one week and keep track of who is participating. You will be provided with an excel file to keep track of who posts this week. Be careful to ensure that you don't miss anyone. Wait until after the week is over and then search for each name and see the date of their last posts (keep in mind that Yammer is on pacific standard time) to see if they participated during your week.

As you interact with students in Yammer be sure to make them feel welcomed, valued, impactful, and necessary. This can be as easy as making time to read their posts and like or respond to the post. You should also try to **push students to make high quality claims by asking for rationale, helping them weigh different perspectives, and pushing people to provide evidence for their claims by referencing reading materials or other online resources.** Your moderating will help make the class more meaningful and extend the classroom experience. High quality posts will also help the class have more meaningful small group discussions by providing access to different ideas and online resources. A good online community is especially important for online students who do not get the benefit of face-to-face contact with other students.

Remember that it is encouraged to share information and to admit that you do not understand. **The goal is not to judge rightness or wrongness of a post, but to promote thinking. Mistakes are valuable as they are opportunities for growth and reflection.** It's okay to be wrong! Being wrong can be an essential part of learning if you take time to understand why you are wrong and what you can do to improve your understanding. **You are encouraged to post your individual points of view, but support them with evidence and ask students for alternative perspectives.** Below are the main goals of our learning community.

As a moderator, you must focus on meeting goals for

1. Developing Community
2. Making the environment useful for learners
3. Pushing for deeper analysis of course content by using readings as evidence
4. Maintaining a safe environment where students feel free to take risks and admit when they do not understand (for more details see table 1 at the end the guide).

2. But how do I meet these goals?

You are just starting and many students have no idea how to ask questions or how to moderate a forum. Think of yourself as a host of a thinking party, responsible for pushing students to think more deeply about course content, but in a friendly and enjoyable way. The first question is what should I discuss? A strategy I use is to go through the reading for that week and decide what the learning objectives are for that week (you can find this in the themes for the syllabus). I

then look at what the author is claiming. I use this information to try to push the class to think about the paper critically while paying attention to the theme of the papers.

Simply sharing information usually does not lead to deep discussions, but asking good questions can. There are different types of questions you can ask, each meeting the needs for different kinds of learning. In the Example of Posts section you will find different types of questions, inspired from the works of various researchers (Borge & Goggins, 2013; Herrenkohl, 2006; Nückles, Hübner, & Renkl, 2009; Shimoda, et al., 2013, White & Frederiksen, 2005). These are just a few examples, but you can surely come up with more. Just remember to be mindful to adhere to our community goals listed in Table 1. And be sure to do each of the following:

1) Examine the instructor's early posts to see how they worked to get class members to think about and extend course content.
2) Build upon other's posts and respond to their statements and questions.
3) Make sure that you post a range of content and questions and take time to think deeply about course content.
4) Examine the claims people make and opinions they share, not to try to prove them wrong, but rather to try to understand their point. Moderators should push community members to make claims like a professional IST consultants. To seek out sources and the latest information, to use logical rationale, and cite credible sources.

Lastly, you can gauge how successful you are being as a moderator (to a certain extent) by looking to see whether your classmates are posting high-quality posts. Students should not post the same type of post each time, but rather try to engage with the moderator, think about, and explore the content. When this happens you will the full range of responses shown in table 2.

Example of Posts:

Cognitive (pushing to extend and understand core concepts):

1. This week we are learning about "X", can you find videos or articles that provide concrete examples of "X" in the real world?
2. This week we are reading Author et al. (2015) and the authors discuss security issues, but how important is this for students in K-12, and what evidence is their to support your point of view?
3. In the book the authors claim discuss copyright law and the ways it destroys creativity. What are other perspectives on this issue that the author did not explore?
4. I found this week's chapter about security and risk a bit dry since this can be such a controversial topic! What interesting examples of issues related to security and risk can you find in the news and how do they connect to parts of the reading?

Modeling risk taking and thinking (helping students to feel comfortable admitting they did not understand but that they can look for resources to help):

1. This week as I read the paper, I had a difficult time understanding "X", So I went and Googled "X" and found some interesting stuff. Here is one example, How does this example help you to better understand X, or does it? (include attachment).
2. I had a really hard time with this week's readings, what in the world does the author mean by activity model? Can anyone post examples?

3. Databases are not my thing, but I know there are experts in this class. Can someone help to explain how a database works in a simpler way? Resources from the web would be great too!
4. I had a hard time thinking of questions for this chapter. What did you guys come up with?
5. Our team is having a hard time improving our discussions. What strategies has your team used to try to improve on knowledge negotiation?

Metacognitive (pushing students to think about their own thinking and learning processes):

1. What jargon or concepts from this weeks readings have you found the most difficult to understand and why?
2. This week was your first reflection of our community, thinking back on the last few weeks, what do you think has been our greatest strengths and weaknesses?
3. We read a lot for this class, how do you read the papers? What strategies do you find helpful? Do you take notes, underline, draw?
4. Hi Folks, please go to the Google survey link I have provided below and write any words or phrases that you did not understand or had a hard time understanding this week. If you have multiple words be sure to connect them with an underscore AND use only lowercase letters. For example: conceptual_models. Also, do not put commas between your words. I will then take your answers, create a wordle at wordle.net, and post a screen shot to yammer like the one below so we can "see" what was difficult for the class:

Table 1: Goals, objectives and examples for creating a learning community presented to students.

Goal Type	Objective	Example
Community	• Make students feel welcome • Make students feel valued • Make students feel necessary • Make students feel impactful	• Go out of way read what people write and like posts • Point out when really good posts are presented • Ensure that the community grow and evolve as students desire as long as it meets goals
Utility	• Provide students with resources • Provide students with opportunities to extend thinking • Provide students with opportunities to reflect on understanding	• Tools, examples • Share ideas, question content, make connections to real world, take thinking out of the classroom • Compare difficult concepts, push thinking
Practice	• Keep content relevant • Keep content professional • Keep a range of content complexity	• Make sure yammer content connects to weekly course content • Try to encourage appropriate content • Provide readings and examples from a range of academic and professional sources/media
Psychological safety (Edmondson, 1999)	• Make students feel safe to share information and admit they do not understand • Show students mistakes are valuable • Set guidelines for constructive criticism	• Not judging rightness or wrongness-but prompting thinking • Make it okay to be wrong, by modeling it yourself • Encourage people to propose different points of view in a positive way

Table 2. Range of responses that students post in a Yammer environment from Borge & Goggins (2014). As a moderator you want to encourage high quality posts , those that go beyond simple sharing and directly relate to understanding curse content (in the light gray). Metacognitive posts (dark gray) are also encouraged, but should not take up the majority of posts.

OT- Off task	Posts that not related to course content or learning,
CM- Class Management	Posts related to organizing, coordinating, documenting, or deciding on classroom activity.
1- Sharing (SHR)	Discussing content or facts- not making hard claims that are supported by rational or evidence. Includes no rational or concrete examples related to real-world use, no links or attachments to additional material, and no reference to previous reply.
2- Extending (EXT)	Extending available readings or content material by providing links or attachments to additional content (video, article, concrete example, etc.) to help think about or understand course content. May include level 1 behaviors, but cannot Include rational or concrete examples related to real-world use, or reference to previous reply.
3. Checking/ Rewording (C/R)	Checking understanding, clarifying what someone previously said, or rewording (repeating or rephrasing without adding new ideas) what a previous person said. May include level 1 or 2 behaviors, but cannot include a new fact or opinion. Also no claims are supported with rational or evidence, there can be no examples of how an idea connect to the real-world, or that the poster is reflecting on their own learning or thinking processes.
4- Synthesizing (SYN)	Connecting info to other info - making connections to the real-world, bringing multiple ideas together. Evidence that post is referring to previous post and adding to the idea, or that poster is connecting a previous idea to a real-world example that no-one else has mentioned. May include level 1-3 behaviors, but cannot simply be repeating previous connection made by other posters, or Include evidence or rational for claims, or that the poster is reflecting on their own learning or thinking processes.
5- Interpreting (INT)	Connecting course content info to other info and making a judgment about it or evaluating a claim or work. Claims or opinions MUST be supported with Rational or evidence, or they must show that they are weighing ideas against each other. May include level 1-3 behaviors, but cannot show evidence of reflecting on their own learning or thinking processes.
MC- metacognitive Reflection/Awareness	Thinking about or sharing awareness of their own learning or learning experiences as an object of thought. Reflecting on learning process, or demonstrating awareness of learning process by articulating learning patterns, or needs as learners. May include level 1-5 behaviors.

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