RamCT
Discussion Forums and Wikis

Overview
The Discussion tool in RamCT can be used encourage thoughtful contributions to online questions and foster a sense of community.

The Wiki tool can allow instructors and students to collaborate on class projects.

Instructors can assign grades to students for their participation in discussions and wikis.

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Best Practices and Universal Design Principles

The Institute for Teaching and Learning (TILT) as CSU has developed Best Practices in Online Course Design.

http://tilt.colostate.edu/courses.cfm

We recommend that instructors incorporate these best practices into the development of their RamCT courses.

Instructors should also take into consideration different learning styles differing physical abilities when they prepare their content. Information on how to include this concept, called Universal Design, is posted at:

http://accessproject.colostate.edu/udl/

What’s New
For summer 2013, the following are new for Discussions:

- All posts on one page - all of the posts in a thread are now visible at the same time on one page.
- Role highlighting - posts made by forum managers and moderators now contain the user’s course role and forum role.
- Inline replies - when replying to a post, the content editor used to write a response appears on the same page, in the context of the discussion.
- Post First Setting - instructors can use a new forum setting to require students to post to a forum before they can see other students’ posts.
Terms To Know

Discussion Forums
The Discussion Board offers a vehicle for interpersonal interaction in an online course. Discussions can serve a range of purposes, such as:

- An online meeting place for social interaction among peers
- A medium to pose questions about homework assignments, readings, and course content
- A graded activity that demonstrates understanding or application of course material

Wikis
A wiki is a collaborative tool that allows students to contribute and modify one or more pages of course related materials, providing a means of sharing and collaboration. Pages can be created and edited quickly. Course members and the instructor can track changes and additions, while viewing the progress of individual contributions.

Create A Discussion Forum

You can create a link to/access discussion forums on:

- Tool Area
- Course Menu
- Content Areas

a. Click on the Discussions tool.

b. Click Create Forum.
Forum Information

c.  *Type* a **name** for the Forum.

d.  *Type* a **Description** for the Forum.

1. **Forum Information**
   
   - **Name**: Week 1 Reading Discussion
   
   *Description*
   
   After reading the materials for week 1, post your reaction to the readings in the Week 1 Reading Discussion Forum.

Forum Availability

2. **Forum Availability**

   e.  *Available* – do you want to make the forum available to your students?

   You can set a Display After and Display Until date for the forum.
Forum Settings

3. **Forum Settings**

   If Due Date is set, submissions are accepted after this date, but are marked late.

   **Viewing Threads/Replies**
   - **Standard View**
     - Participants must create a thread in order to view other threads in this forum.
     - If participants are required to create threads in order to view other threads in the forum, they cannot delete or edit their own posts, and cannot post anonymously. Those options will be set for you automatically.

**Standard View** – students can enter the forum right away, view instructor and other students’ posts.

**Participants must create a thread in order to view other threads in this forum.**
- Use this option if you want a student to create their own post first, before they view and are influenced by the post of others.

   **Grade**
   - **No Grading in Forum**
   - **Grade Discussion Forum**: Points possible: 5
   - **Grade Threads**
     - Show participants in "needs grading" status [ ] after every 1 [ ] Posts

   **Due Date**
   - Enter dates as mm/dd/yyyy. Time may be entered in any increment.

   **Associated Rubrics**
   - [Add Rubric]

   a. **You can set your discussion forum to be graded.** You can grade discussions in the discussion forum or in the grade center, under the corresponding discussion grade center column

   b. **NEW:** You can set a **threshold** that will notify you when a student’s discussion posts need grading.

   c. You can use a **Rubric** to provide grading criteria.

   d. **Click Submit** to create the forum.
One of the benefits of giving a discussion forum a grade, even if it is for 1 point, is to allow the instructor to see a summary screen that shows the level of participation by each student. And to then allow the instructor to view the posts made by an individual student.

**NEW - Allowing Email Subscriptions**

a. Students and instructors can be allowed to either subscribe to an entire forum or to specific threads within a forum.

When email subscription is enabled, RamCT sends out email alerts if there are new posts or replies.

*Note:* Because users have to login to RamCT, the link to the post included in the email will not work. We recommend that you choose “Include body of post in the email”.

The instructor decides whether the subscription email contains the entire message or a link to the message.

Subscriptions to forums or threads can be enabled when the forum is first created or when the forum settings are edited. Both instructors and students can subscribe.

e. Once the discussion forum is created, open the discussion forum.

f. At the top, click **Subscribe**.

Copies of discussion posts will be sent as an email to the email account you have registered as part of your CSU eID.
g. **Allow Anonymous Posts**
Author identity is anonymous to students and instructors.

Anonymous Posts are not allowed if the discussion is graded.

h. **Allow Author to Delete Own Posts** – usually not a good idea.

i. **Allow Author to Edit Own Published Posts.**

j. **Allow Post Tagging**
Tags are text labels that act like bookmarks. You can tag posts to group similar messages together.

For example, if the subject of scientific notation is discussed often, tag each of the posts on this topic. Students can read, filter, and search messages using these tags, but they cannot create tags.

**Tip:** For faster Discussion Board loading, disable tagging during the times forum usage is heavy. When you enable tagging again, all tags are restored.
If you want to
Create effective social forums

Select settings
• Allow anonymous posts
• No grading in forum

Create forums where users have control of the discussion

• Allow author to delete own posts
• Allow author to edit own published posts
• Allow members to create new threads
• Allow members to rate posts

Have a tightly controlled forum

• Force moderation of posts
• Grade by forum or grade by thread
• Do not allow members to create new threads so they focus on existing threads

_Edit Discussion Properties_

Once a forum has been created, you can use the drop down menu next to its name to Edit, Grade, Manage etc.
Post A Message To A Discussion Forum

a. Click on a discussion forum.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forum</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Total Posts</th>
<th>Unread Posts</th>
<th>Total Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Getting Started Discussion</td>
<td>Post your thoughts on why you would use RamCT as a way to enhance student learning.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 1/Reading Discussion</td>
<td>Discuss the week 1 readings.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b. Click Create Thread.

c. Type a subject for your message.

2. Message

   Subject: Week 1 Jane Goodall Article Review

   What are your impressions of the Jane Goodall reading? Contrast her viewpoints on sibling interaction with the course textbook's view.

d. Type your discussion comments.

   The Text Editor allows you to attach a file, image, link to a video, etc.

   You can add attachments to your discussion post.

3. Attachments

   Attach File

   [Browse My Computer] [Browse Course]

e. Click Submit.
View Discussion Posts

At the top right of a Discussion Forum, you can choose to view discussion posts in a **List View** or a **Tree View**.

### List View

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thread Actions</th>
<th>Collect</th>
<th>Delete</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thread</th>
<th>Date/Time</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Unread Posts</th>
<th>Total Posts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5/25/13 8:44 AM</td>
<td><strong>BP 11 Thread</strong></td>
<td><strong>Kevin Nolan Instructor</strong></td>
<td>Published</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8/21/13 2:50 PM</td>
<td><strong>Test Student Disc Thread</strong></td>
<td><strong>Anonymous</strong></td>
<td>Published</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Tree View

Select: *All None* | **Message Actions** | Expand All | **Collapse All** | 4 Posts in this Thread | 0 Unread

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anonymous</th>
<th><strong>Test Student Disc Thread</strong></th>
<th>9 months ago</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous</td>
<td><strong>RE: Test Student Disc Thread</strong></td>
<td>9 months ago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reply to a Discussion Post

At the bottom of a discussion post, a user can click Reply to reply to that particular post.

Organizing Discussion Forums

**NEW - Discussion Collections**

Within a discussion thread detail page only one post can be read at a time. Instructors and students can use the Collect feature to read multiple posts on a page.

a. Within a discussion, on a page with multiple posts, place a check next to the items you would like to see on a page.

b. **Click Collect.**
On the **Collection page** you can *filter, sort and print* the collected discussion posts.

Print Preview allows you to print out the page with the discussion posts you collected.

![Print Preview](image)

**NEW - Discussion Tags**

Discussion tags are text labels which act like bookmarks. An instructor can attach tags to group similar messages together. For example, out of 50 posts to a discussion forum, the instructor can tag/select 5 posts which represent good clarification or summary of the topic.

Students can read, filter and search messages using tags.

The instructor **must turn on the tag feature** in the discussion forum in order to allow tags.

And the instructor **must be in the List View** in the discussion forum.

a. **On a thread page** place a **check** next to the **discussion items** you would like to tag.

b. **Click Collect**.
c. **On the Collection page type a name in the Tag text box.**

d. **Select** the items on the Collection page you would like to add the tag.

e. **Click Add** next to the Tag text box to associate the items you selected with the tag you created.

When you enter a discussion forum students and instructors, under the Tags column can view any tags that the instructor has created.

**Search Discussion Forums**

Instructors and students can search discussion forums by key words.

a. At the top right of a discussion forum **click** on the Search tab.

b. **Type a word of phrase** to search for.

c. **Select** in which discussion forum to search.

d. **Set a time frame** for your search.

e. **Click Go.**
Grade A Discussion Forum

a. At the top of a discussion forum click Grade Forum.

b. Next to a student’s name click Grade.

You will see a collection of the user’s posts to the forum to assist in evaluating and grading their participation.

Forum Statistics
Provides a summary of the number of posts.

Forum Grade

c. Click on Edit Grade.

d. Type a Grade Value.

e. Type feedback.

f. Type Grading Notes for yourself and instructors/TA’s.

g. Click Save Grade.
You can also grade a discussion forum from the Grade Center.

h. In the column for the discussion, **click on the drop down menu** in the lower right corner and **select View User Activity**.

**What A Student Sees**

On their **course notifications dashboard**, a **student** can see if there are new discussion posts.

They can **click on the Discussion tool** and click on a Discussion Forum.

They can subscribe via email to a discussion forum if you have selected this option.
When a student clicks Reply they can enter a Subject, Text of their discussion post, add attachments and click Submit.

Grades can be viewed by a student within a discussion form by clicking on Grading Information.

Students can also use the My Grades tool to view their discussion forum grades.
Course Wikis

A Wiki is a collaborative tool which allows students and instructors to contribute and modify one or more pages of material in a RamCT course. A Course Wiki can serve as a source of information compiled by course members where each contributes their knowledge, experience and expertise on a topic. The instructor acts as a facilitator, helping the course members to build a repository of information.

Student contributions to a Wiki can be assigned a grade or the Wiki can be used solely for content review.

The instructor can also enable the Group Wiki to help groups share and interact.

You can create links to/access a wiki on:

- Tool Area
- Course Menu
- Content Areas
Create A Wiki

The first page that is created in a Wiki is called the Home Page.

Instructors create the initial Wiki home page. Instructors and students can then add pages to a Wiki. Instructors can delete wiki pages; students cannot delete wiki pages.

a. Under Course Tools click Wikis.

b. Click Create Wiki.

Wiki Information

c. Type a name for the wiki.

d. In the Text Editor box you can type a description, instructions, etc.

Wiki Date and Time Restrictions

e. You can make the wiki available to your students.

f. You can set a date Display After and Display Until date.
Wiki Participation

g. *Open or close the Wiki for editing.*

h. Wiki Settings

i. Will the Wiki be **graded**? If so, a corresponding column will be created in the Grade Center.

You would usually close the wiki when it is time to grade student participation.

j. **Click Submit.**

The Wiki will appear on the Wiki page. You can access wikis from the Tools link. Add a course menu link to your wiki. Or you can add an Interactive Tool link to a specific Wiki in a Content Area.
Edit A Wiki page

At the top right click Edit Wiki Content.

When a wiki page is being edited by one user it is locked to prevent others from editing the same page at the same time.

Comment On A Wiki Page

Instructors and students can comment on contributions others have made to a wiki page.

a. On the bottom right of a wiki page click Comment.

b. In the Comment box type your information.

c. Click Add.

Link To Other Wiki Pages

When you edit a wiki page, you have the option to link to other wiki pages that you may wish to reference.

In the text editor click on the “select wiki page” icon.
**History/Compare Versions**

A new version of a wiki page is created each time the page is saved.

You can compare versions of a wiki page by using the History feature.

a. Use the **drop down menu next to a wiki page** and select **History**.

   You will see all versions of a wiki page, with the most recent version at the top.

You can compare two versions of a wiki page to see what changes took place between versions.

b. Place a check next to the versions you would like to compare and click **Compare Versions**.

**Legend** – view how one version has changed in comparison to the other version.
Add Images, links and media
Instructors and students can add rich content such as images, links to other wikis or web pages, audio or video to a wiki page.

When you edit or create a wiki, you have access to the Text Editor.

The **third row of icons** in the Text Editor contains the rich text items.

*Add file, Add image*

*Add MPG/AVI video (Windows Media Player), Add Quick Time video*

*Add Audio, Add Flash or Shockwave file*

*Add YouTube video*

Grading A Wiki

**Close Student Editing of a Wiki Page**
If you choose to grade students on their contributions to a wiki, it’s likely that at some point you will want to disable, or prevent students from adding to the wiki while you assess their level of performance.

a. On a Wiki page, under the **Student Access** drop down menu select **Close to Editing**.
Viewing Wiki Participation

On the Participation Summary page, an instructor can view a list of all student participation for the current Wiki being viewed. An instructor can assess individual student contributions to the wiki and provide a grade for a student.

b. Click on the wiki you would like to assess

c. At the top right on the wiki’s home page, click Participation and Grading.

On the Participation Summary page you will see a list of all students who have contributed to the wiki.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Words Modified (Number Count)</th>
<th>Words Modified (Percentage)</th>
<th>Page Saves (Number Count)</th>
<th>Page Saves (Percentage)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kevin Nolan</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kevin Student</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the Participation Summary page you will see a list of all students who have contributed to the wiki.

d. Click on a student’s name.

**Participant’s Contribution: Kevin Student**

All pages and versions that you have modified are listed. To see your specific changes, choose to compare versions under User’s Mod Page Version column to view the version without annotated changes. More Help

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page Version</th>
<th>User’s Modifications</th>
<th>Created On</th>
<th>Words Modified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mission statement</td>
<td></td>
<td>9/6/11 2:52 PM</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You will see a Participation Summary for that student.

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Assign A Grade

e. Click Edit Grade.

f. Enter a grade for the student.

g. Type feedback which the student will see.

h. Type Grading Notes that can be seen by other instructors and TA’s.

i. Click Save Grade.

What A Student Sees

A student can click on a wiki that has been in the course.

Student Adds Page To Wiki

A student click on Create Wiki Page to add a new page to a wiki.

Student Comments on Wiki Page

On a wiki page, a student can click on Comment.

The student can type their comment for that particular wiki page and click Add.
**Student Contribution and Grades**

On the home page for a wiki a student can *click* on **My Contributions** to see how much they have contributed to a wiki.

On the **My Contribution** page a student can see:

Their **Participation Summary**.

Their **Grade** and any feedback you may have provided.

Students can also see their wiki grade and instructor feedback under the **My Grades** tool.
Create Discussion Forum, Wikis For A Group

When you create a group in RamCT, you are given the option to create corresponding wikis, discussion forums, journals, blogs, email groups, etc.

a. Under Course Management | Control Panel click Users and Groups.

b. Click Groups.


d. Type a name for the group.

Optional: type a description for the group.

e. Decide whether to make the group available to members.
f. Select the **tools** that you would like the group to be able to use.

![Tool Availability](image)

2. **Tool Availability**

   - Blogs
     - No grading
     - Grade: Points possible: [ ]
   - Collaboration
   - Discussion Board
   - Email
   - File Exchange
   - Journals
     - No grading
     - Grade: Points possible: [ ]
   - Tasks
   - Wikis
     - No grading
     - Grade: Points possible: [ ]
   - Show participants in “needs grading” status [ ] after every [ ] Page Saves

   ![Add Rubric](image)

3. **Module Personalization Setting**

   - Allow individual group members to personalize group space modules
   - Allow Personalization

4. **Membership**

   ![Membership](image)

   - Selected Items: Stud20, CSU, Stud21, CSU, Stud22, CSU
   - Move to list of selected items

   ![Select Options](image)

   - Invert Selection
   - Select All

   ![Select Options](image)

   - Invert Selection
   - Select All

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*Discussions & Wikis*
A corresponding wiki for group 3 was created.

Links to the corresponding tools appear under a student’s **My Groups** area in RamCT.

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**RamCT Help / Support**

**RamCT Help Web Site**
[http://help.ramct.colostate.edu](http://help.ramct.colostate.edu)

**Blackboard’s On Demand Learning Center**

**College RamCT Coordinators**
[http://help.ramct.colostate.edu/ramctsupport_faculty.aspx](http://help.ramct.colostate.edu/ramctsupport_faculty.aspx)

**Central RamCT Support Email**
[ramctsupport@colostate.edu](mailto:ramctsupport@colostate.edu)
Appendix I: Discussion and Wiki Exercises

DISCUSSIONS

1. With your Student Training account, login to the training Collaboration Course.

2. On the Course Menu click on Discussions.

3. Click on the class discussion forum

4. Subscribe to have copies of discussion posts sent to your email account. (p. 6)

5. - Add a new post. (p. 9)

6. - Reply to a post (p. 11)

7. Login to your email account and see if copies of the discussion posts have arrived in your email.

8. With your Instructor Training account, login to the training Collaboration Course.

9. View the discussion posts made by your student account. (p. 10)

10. Give your training student a grade for their discussion participation. (p. 14)

WIKIS

11. With your Student Training account, login to the training Collaboration Course.

12. Click on the Wikis tool.

13. Create a new wiki page. (p. 18)

14. Comment on a fellow student’s wiki page. (p. 20)

15. Login with your Instructor Account to the Collaboration Course.

16. View your student accounts wiki participation. (p. 23)

17. Give you student account a grade for their wiki participation. (p. 24)