Discussion Boards of the Future
In The Beginning

- I hated discussion boards
- Prompts were dry and uninteresting
- Student responses were relatively identical
- Many students just didn't participate
Before the Question

Start

Undergrad
General Business
Tutored in the hallway

Grad School
Writing Center
Informal tutoring

Writing Center
Peer tutoring
Professional tutoring

End
What's Wrong With Discussion Boards?

- Prone to shortcuts
- Easy to disengage
  Caspi, Chajut, Saporta, Beyth-Marom, p. 139
- Boring
What's Right With Discussion Boards?

- Gives each student a voice/Allows the instructor to encourage or require participation
- Allows reflection before committing to a comment
- Archived for future reference
What's Right With Face to Face Discussion?

- Students usually want to participate
  Caspi, Chajut, Saporta, Beyth-Marom, p. 139

- Easier to have beneficial interactions through student-driven inquiry and self-identification of need

- Allows students to learn through teaching
WHAT SHOULD DISCUSSION BOARDS DO?
What I Want

1. Less emphasis on essay writing
2. Less focus on “the right answer”

But

3. More emphasis on inquiry
4. More space for real questions
5. More community
# The Best of Both Worlds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Traditional Online</th>
<th>Traditional FtF</th>
<th>Best of Both</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Presence</strong></td>
<td>Each student is heard</td>
<td>Classroom culture encourages participation</td>
<td>Each student is encouraged to have a voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Engagement</strong></td>
<td>Reflection before interaction</td>
<td>Self-identification of need/idea</td>
<td>Reflective and self-identified engagement with peers and/or instructors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning</strong></td>
<td>Archived</td>
<td>Informal learning through peer engagement</td>
<td>Student teaching and learning refined by the instructor and available for all</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
English 1301 and 1302

Initially, each student will draft a question for their peers about the lessons 2 or 3 that not answered in the lessons or post a resource for other students that is related to those lesson’s content (that is safe for public consumption)...Posts should be at least 100 words, and the post must be clear and provide enough detail to be useful. This part is worth 10 points.

You will also respond to at least one other student to answer a question, post a resource in response to a question, or contribute to the discussion of a topic. Replies should be at least 100 words...
British Literature I

Draft a question for discussion that prompts analysis, interpretation, or research (no recall, overly subjective, or text to world connection questions) that addresses the Anglo-Norman works addressed in this lesson...

For your reply, you should select one question to reply to (not your own question) in 250-300 words. Replies must include primary source support (at least one quote) and may include secondary source support if necessary...
The Tools of Now

Twitter
- Synchronous
- Text-based
- Branched conversations
- Limited or stringed replies

Flipgrid
- Synchronous
- Engaging
- Audio/visual
- Conversational

Google Meet
- Synchronous
- Audio/visual
- Screen sharing
- Attachments

Embedded Discussion Boards
- Asynchronous
- Traditional
- Familiar
- Reflective
An Argument for Asynchronous

- **Reflective**
  Allows students to refine their ideas and process the ideas of others.

- **Conversational**
  Helps students clearly identify each other.
  Helps students grasp the idea of the “Academic Conversation” better.

- **Applicable**
  Asynchronous discussion board posts replicate email more closely than other assignments.
  Can allow students to practice wording of self-generated ideas.

- **Written**
  As Scott Warnock puts it in *TEACHING Writing Online*, asynchronous, text-based conversations make students “[w]rite, write, and write some more” (69)


Li, Fang, and Yingqin Liu. “Can Using a Discussion-Board Enhance Writing Practice for EAP/ESL Students?” Theory and Practice in Language Studies, no. 5, 2018, p. 467. EBSCOhost, http://dx.doi.org/10.17507/pls.0805.02


Warnock, Scott. Teaching Writing Online. NCTE, 2009.
“When we focus our students on finding the answers, we stop them from thinking. However, if we can teach them to ask questions and give permission for their questioning, we set the stage for critical thinking to occur.”

Toledo, p. 150