INCLUDING FORUMS

AS AN INTERACTIVE ONLINE LEARNING TOOL

A **forum** is an activity teachers can incorporate into their Moodle courses to facilitate the exchange of ideas. These ideas are shared with others when an individual posts their own comments to a thread that the teacher initiates, guides, and monitors. These activities can have a significant impact on the effectiveness of a course. They encourage communication and help to build a sense of community amongst the participants, which is often a challenge in an online learning environment.

A unique capability of forums is found in the grading options it offers. Grading can be conducted in a traditional manner, which gives the entire grading responsibility to the teacher. But another way to grade includes the students' input. They can be given permission to rate each other's posts. This can be a great way to keep the students accountable to one another, but be mindful of the course content and forum subject when deciding on a grading method. Differing opinions on sensitive topics might lead to unfair ratings.

FOUR TYPES OF FORUMS:

o Standard Forum for General Use

This is an open forum where anyone can start a new discussion at any time.

o Standard Forum Displayed in Blog-like Format

This is an open forum where anyone can start a new discussion at any time, and in which discussion topics are displayed on one page with "Discuss this topic" links.

o Q and A Forum

This forum requires that students first post their perspectives before viewing other students' posts.

o Forum – Each Person Posts One Discussion

This type of forum is set up so that each student can post exactly one new discussion topic, which everyone can then reply to.

HOW TO CREATE A FORUM:

1) Add a *Forum* within the appropriate section of your course.
2) Complete the blank fields to your specifications based on the course content, audience, and structure. Don't forget to use the drop down menu to choose the type of forum you want. If you don't do this, it will use the default (Standard Forum for General Use).