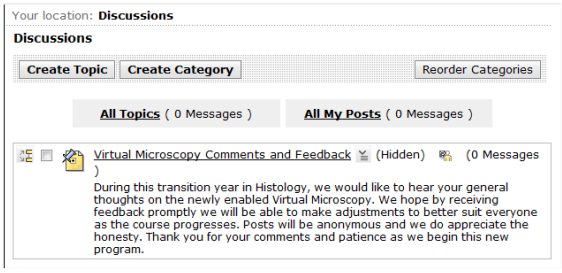
Description

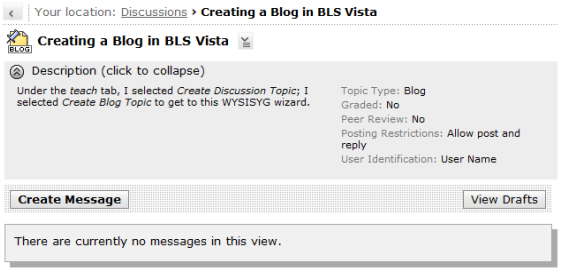
BLS VISTA 24/7 HELP DESK

The *Discussion Board* is an *asynchronous* tool available in BLS Vista/WebCT used to communicate with members of a BLS Vista class. The Discussions tool allows one to create topics relevant to the course where users enrolled in the course can post and reply to messages. Users can ask questions, generate discussion, and encourage students to share feedback and ideas. Section instructors can assign grades for participation, just as they would in a classroom course.

There are *three types of discussion* topics:

- *Threaded*: Create a threaded topic for a more traditional online discussion. Participants post and reply to messages. Replies that are associated with the same post are grouped together, creating message threads that can be expanded and collapsed.
- *Class blog*: Create a collaborative blog (weblog) space by allowing participants to post a chronological series of entries on a particular topic. Participants can then add comments to any blog entry.
- *Journal*: Create a journal topic to give Students a place for their own writing. The journals can be kept private between the Student and the Section Instructor or shared with the class.





General Strengths & Weaknesses

Useful for sustaining dialogue and collaboration over a period of time while providing class members with resources and information that are instantly accessible, day or night.

The primary weakness of the discussion board tools is the time required for the users to routinely participate and contribute.

UMMS users report that "*…students didn't use it very much. When they see us all the time, many seem to prefer face-to-face discussions.*"

Peer Resources

David Clive
Susan Gagliardi
Lisa Hall-Anderson
Mary Hawthorne
John McCullough
Lyn Riza
Carrie Saarinen

UMMS Information Services Support

The UMMS user must contact the Worcester Support HelpDesk to verify username and password information before logging on to BLS. All BLS Vista features are registration-based; all privileged use (i.e., teacher & builder) requires UMMS training.

Technical assistance for Vista is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

- Send email to Worcester Support,
- Call 1-888-301-6102 (UMassOnline HelpDesk)

Assistance for **Vista Instructors and Designers:**
UMMS Instructional Technology's Vista web site.

Register for the next UMMS *training*.

UMassOnline Login web page

Contact the UMMS HelpDesk