ITIBB-0140-WEB
BLACKBOARD DISCUSSION BOARDS
UNIT 1: INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

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UNIT 1 – INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

During this unit of instruction we will define what a Blackboard Discussion Board is, as well as review key Discussion Board terms that are necessary to understand in order to successfully operate Blackboard Discussion Boards.

UNIT 1 - OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this unit you will be able to:

1. Define what a Blackboard Discussion board is.
2. Define the following terms as well as how they make up the hierarchal structure of a Blackboard Discussion Board student engagement tool:
   a. Discussion Board (Tools) Area
   b. Discussion Board Forum
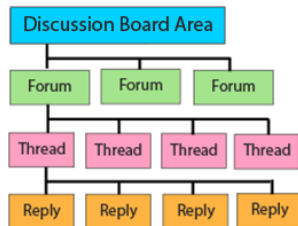   c. Discussion Forum "Threads"
   d. Discussion Forum "Replies"

WHAT IS A BLACKBOARD DISCUSSION BOARD?

- Discussion Boards are one of the seven built-in student engagement tools available for instructor use in Blackboard courses.

- Discussion Boards are used to facilitate online class discussions. Discussion Boards are a powerful student discussion engagement tool, which can be used in all modalities of teaching such as online, traditional face-to-face, and blended courses.

- Discussion Boards are an asynchronous tool. Meaning students do not need to be online in the class Discussion Board area at the same time, such as needed for an online class chat or web conferencing session.

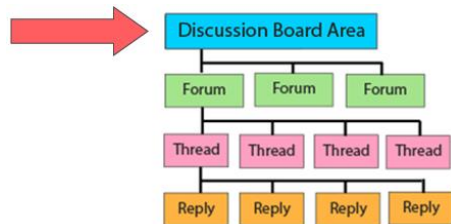**Blackboard Discussion Boards Are Hierarchal?**

The first thing to understand about Blackboard Discussion Boards, are they organized in the specific hierarchal manner. Below you will see the hierarchal components that make up a Blackboard Discussion Board.

Next, let's break down the above hierarchal diagram of the components that make up a Blackboard Discussion Board tool to see what each level is responsible for.

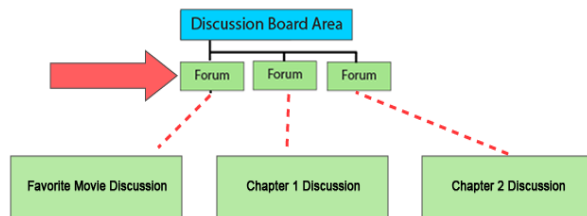### FOUR KEY DISCUSSION BOARD TERMS WORTH KNOWING:

The following Discussion Board terms are how active Discussion Board users refer to various features that make up a course Discussion Board area.

1 - Discussion Board Area:

This term is the top rung in the hierarchal structure of Blackboard's Discussion Board tool. The Discussion Board area, is the central area in a Blackboard course that houses all of a class discussions that have been set up by the course instructor.
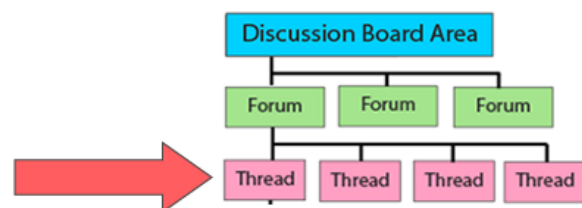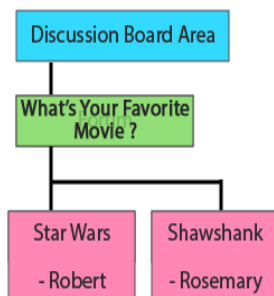
2 - Discussion Board Forum:

The second rung on Discussion Board's hierarchical structure are Discussion Board Forums. Discussion Board Forums represent each of the individual class discussion topics created by the course instructor for a given course.

Using the picture above, we see there are three discussion forum "topics": *Favorite Movie Discussion, Chapter 1 Discussion, and Chapter 2 Discussion.* Each of the separate "forums" will be used to house class discussions for the given topics.

3 - Discussion Board (or Forum) "Threads":

The third rung on Discussion Board's hierarchical structure are Discussion Board "Threads". Discussion Board "Threads" are the starter discussion messages students share with the class in response to a specific course discussion "Forum" (or topic) initiated by the course instructor.

The picture to the left shows how a possible class Discussion Board area could be structured up to the Discussion Forum "Thread":
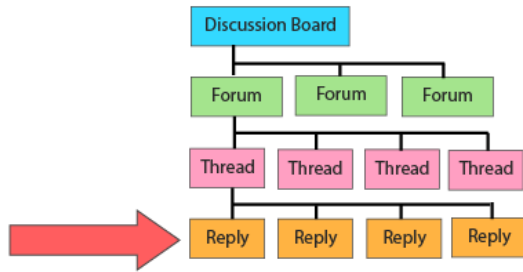
Top Rung - We have a class **Discussion Board Area**.
Second Rung – Discussion Board "**Forum**" (or topic) is "*What's Your Favorite Movie?*"
Third Rung – Two students have posted an answer (or "**Thread**") in response to the
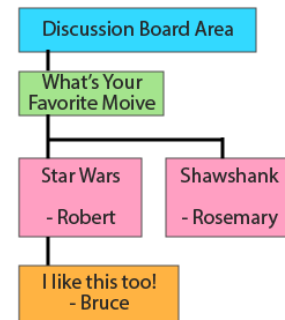
course instructor's discussion "forum " question about favorite movies – Robert shared with the class that he likes Star Wars, Rosemary shared with the class that she likes Shawshank Redemption.

4 - Discussion Board (or Forum) "Replies":

The last rung on Discussion Board's hierarchical structure are Discussion Board "Replies". Discussion Board replies occur anytime a student responds directly to another student's discussion thread.

Expanding on our previous example of "What's Your Favorite Movie," the picture to the right illustrates a Discussion Board (or Forum) "reply". In this example, Robert has shared with the class (a Discussion Thread) that he likes the movie Star Wars. After hearing that Robert likes Star Wars, Bruce posted a discussion "reply" directly to Robert that he too likes the movie Star Wars.
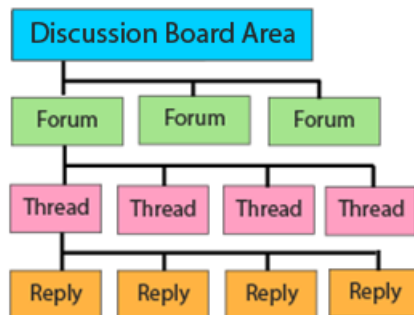
UNIT 1 – SUMMARY

- Discussion Boards are one of the seven built-in student engagement tools available for instructor use in Blackboard courses.

- Discussion Boards are used to facilitate online class discussions. Discussion Boards are a powerful student discussion engagement tool, which can be used in all modalities of teaching such as online, traditional face-to-face, and blended courses.

- Discussion Boards are an asynchronous tool. Meaning students do not need to be online in the class Discussion Board area at the same time, such as needed for an online class chat or web conferencing session.

- Blackboard Discussion Boards are organized in the specific hierarchal manner.

- The hierarchal layers found in a Blackboard course Discussion Board area are made up of Forums, Threads, and Replies.