

Yellowdig Discussions- An Onboarding Guide

Increase engagement and reduce your grading workload

Yellowdig is a social learning platform designed to support student engagement in discussions around content relevant to your course. This platform allows students to share videos, articles, and other web-based content. The configurable grading supports instructor creation of automatic grading based on the number of words in pins and comments, likes, instructor badges, and even allows you to require students to participate consistently over the entire semester.

Yellowdig is available to all University of Nebraska-Lincoln instructors to add to their Canvas course site. The Engage platform is accessible and approved by the University Privacy and Security team. Here are a few simple steps to set Yellowdig up (this should take less than 30 minutes).

Faculty at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln have shared their experiences using Yellowdig in a recent [webinar](#) and in a [panel presentation](#).

To Configure Yellowdig

Yellowdig can be set to automatically grade student participation. You will create one (*and only one*) Yellowdig assignment in your Canvas course (unlike a traditional discussion board with threads, Yellowdig is your community gathering place).

IMPORTANT: Students must click at least once on the assignment link in Canvas that is associated with your Yellowdig community in order to activate the exchange between both systems. *Clicking on the Yellowdig link in the navigation menu does not perform that needed step.* Clicking on the assignment registers the student, course, and assignment combination with Yellowdig so that it can return the points to the correct student account in Canvas for the gradebook. It is retroactive and the simplest way is to keep the Yellowdig Engage menu hidden for the first week of the course. At the end of the week, go to the grade book and use [Message Students Who...](#) have not submitted to send a reminder to students who have not clicked on the link. After all of the grade returns are confirmed you can make the Yellowdig link visible as a menu shortcut.

1. Go to [Canvas Assignments](#) and click to add a new assignment
2. Name the assignment
*I recommend that you name the assignment **Activate Yellowdig Discussions** at the beginning of the course, then edit and rename the assignment **Yellowdig Discussions** after the first week so it makes more sense in the grade book.*
3. [Follow these templates](#) to explain your Yellowdig assignment to your students in the assignment description, an announcement, and your syllabus. You can also [see an example of the assignment with template text](#).
4. Set the number of points you want for the entire semester or term
I usually set it for 10% of the course grade
5. Display the grade as Points
6. Choose the **External Tool** submission type and select Yellowdig Engage
7. Set a due date for when you want students to complete the first week of discussion

I change this due date every week to keep it on the [students' Dashboard To Do list](#)

- Don't forget to **Save and Publish** to make it visible to students
- Name your community and configure your points rules by going to Yellowdig Settings → Participation

For best results and to save yourself effort in set up, use the default settings!

- Students appreciate large point values even if you scale them back considerably in Canvas. I set the community point goal to 10,000 points, but scale it back to 100 points (10%) in the Canvas grade book.
- Pick a start and end date when students can earn points. Calculate your points based on the **active number of course weeks * 1,000**
- Choose a weekly point limit if you want to encourage students to participate on a regular basis throughout the course.

This is necessary to get the conversations going, but after students start to engage, they usually go far beyond the "needed" points in their interaction. I usually choose 1,200 to allow students flexibility.

- Creating a new post (pin) and commenting on another user's post are both behaviors that students are used to doing in a traditional discussion board
 - Receiving a comment from another user means that the student has posted something interesting that people want to discuss and therefore they should be rewarded for that behavior
 - Receiving a reaction means that students are reading each other's posts (otherwise they scroll past it, this is common in social media)
- Create **Topics** based on the ideas you want to discuss (not the weeks of the course or chapters in the textbook) and choose whether you want the topic labels to be suggested or required. I usually choose required so that students have to consider why they are sharing the item, but this is not necessary for a successful community.

Community Members Earn Points By:	Points	Action
Creating a new Post • With 40 Minimum Words	+250	Edit
Commenting on another user's Post • With 20 Minimum Words	+125	Edit
Receiving a Comment from another user	+75	Edit
Receiving a Reaction from another user	+50	Edit

ADD POINT RULE

Topics List

Allow community facilitators to add topics and decide which ones they would like their members to add on their posts!

LEADERSHIP STRENGTHS ETHICS VISION AND MISSION
MANAGING CONFLICT MEANINGFUL FEEDBACK TEAMS
REFLECTION FUTURE OF WORK TECHNOLOGY DIVERSITY
CLIMATE AND CULTURE GLOBAL MANAGING PEOPLE
OVERCOMING CHALLENGES OTHER

CREATE NEW TOPIC

Topics are suggested

- Start discussing!** Model the behavior you want to see in your students. Don't try to read or comment on everything! Look for interesting pins and participate in the conversation. Do a Yellowdig Spotlight in class to talk about particularly interesting discussions.
- The discussions will now be automatically scored and passed back to the grade book in Canvas.

To **Enable** Yellowdig Engage in the Canvas Navigation

1. Go to Settings in your course
2. Click the Navigation tab
3. Drag up the Yellowdig Engage tool to the course navigation or click Enable
4. Don't forget to **Save** the settings

Additional Resources

- The [Yellowdig Instructor Getting Started Guide](#) has information to help you set up your board guided by data-driven evidence on effectiveness.
- You can also complete the free [Yellowdig Certification Course](#) for more useful tips.
- Read more about [How to Create a Yellowdig Community](#).
- Share the information with your students on [Points and Grade Passback](#).
- Check out the [Yellowdig Training Series](#) on YouTube.