Communication Tools in Learn
(Blogs, Wikis, Journals and Discussion boards)

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### What are they?

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<th>Wiki</th>
<th>Blog</th>
<th>Journal</th>
<th>Discussion Board</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A tool that enables multiple writers to collaboratively contribute and modify one or more pages of content.</td>
<td>A personal online journal that is frequently updated and intended for public viewing.</td>
<td>A personal space for students to communicate privately with the instructor.</td>
<td>An asynchronous tool for sharing thoughts and ideas about a course.</td>
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### Potential Uses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wiki</th>
<th>Blog</th>
<th>Journal</th>
<th>Discussion Board</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group research projects, Student led study guide for a course.</td>
<td>What we did / will do in class</td>
<td>Reflect on personal growth throughout semester</td>
<td>Posing weekly questions related to the course topics</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Peer review</td>
<td>Record field trip experiences</td>
<td>Informal interactions, where students ask and respond to each other's questions,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Areas for concern regarding what was covered in class</td>
<td>Document clinical experiences</td>
<td>Graddable discussion forums and threads to assess students' participation and knowledge</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Saves instructor having to answer individual inquiries</td>
<td>Areas for concern that are private</td>
<td>After each lecture, ask reflective questions to invoke conversation</td>
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<td>Refine an assignment over a period of time, using instructor's guidance and suggestions</td>
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**Wikis**

**Task 1: How to create a Wiki**

1. On the Control Panel, expand the **Course Tools** section.

2. Select **Wikis**.

3. On the Wikis listing page, click **Create Wiki** on the action bar.

4. On the Create Wiki page, type a **Name**.

5. Type **Instructions** (optional)

6. Select the **Yes** option to make the wiki available to users.

7. If required use the Display After and Display Until date and time fields to limit availability.

8. Select the Student Access option.
   
   a. Closed to Editing: Select this option when the instructor will be the only one contributing.
   
   b. Open to Editing: Allows users to modify any wiki page
9. Select either **No marking**, or **Mark Points possible** if you are going to assess the wiki.

10. Click **Submit**.

**Task 2: How to create a wiki page**

Each wiki requires a first page, which is the home page. The home page cannot be deleted, but it can be edited. The home page and all subsequent pages are created following the same steps.

1. Select **Wikis** from the Course Tools list, select a **wiki title**.

![Create Wiki Page screenshot]

2. To create additional pages; click **Create Wiki Page** on the Action Bar.

3. On the Create Wiki Page, type a **Name**.

4. Add text in the **Content** text box.

5. Click **Submit**.

**Task 3: How to add a comment to a wiki page**

Any course member can add a comment to a course wiki page. Comments can be viewed by all course members.

1. Select **Wikis** from the **Course Tools** list, select a wiki title.

2. On the wiki topic page, select the page to view in the side panel.

![Wiki topic page screenshot]

3. Click **Comment** following the user’s contribution.

4. Type a comment in the **Comment** text box.

5. Click **Add**.
Task 4: How to view the participation summary

On the Participation Summary page, you can view a list of all student participation for the current wiki being viewed.

1. Select Wikis from the Course Tools list, select a wiki title.

2. On the wiki topic page’s Action Bar, click Participation Summary for wikis with no grading or Participation and Marking for graded wikis.

3. On the Participation Summary page, view participation for the students who have contributed to the wiki.

4. In the side panel, view information about the wiki

5. Select a user to view his or her Participant’s Contribution page.

6. Page Version: displays all pages created and edited by the user.

7. Words Modified: words added, deleted, or edited.
Journals

Task 5: How to create a Journal

1. Select Journals from the Course Tools list.
2. On the Journals listing page, click Create Journal on the Action Bar.
3. On the Create Journal page, type a Name for the journal.
4. Type optional Instructions for the journal.
5. Under Journal Availability, select the Yes option.
6. Under Journal Settings select Monthly or Weekly depending on how you want to view entries.
7. Optionally select the check boxes to:
   a. Allow Users to Edit and Delete Entries.
   b. Allow Users to Delete Comments.
   c. Permit Course Users to View Journal.
8. Select No marking.
9. Click Submit.
Task 6: Creating journal entries

Instructors and students can create journal entries. Only instructors can comment on individual students’ entries. On the Journals listing page, information is provided about each journal.

1. On the Journals listing page, select a journal title.

2. On the journal’s topic page, click Create Journal Entry on the Action Bar.

3. On the Create Journal Entry page, type a Title for the journal entry.

4. Type text in the Entry Message text box.

5. Click Post Entry to submit the journal entry or click Save Entry as Draft to add the entry later.

Task 7: How to comment on a journal entry

1. On the Journals listing page, select a journal title.

2. On the journal’s topic page, select the journal entry to view by selecting the user’s name in the side panel under More Journals.

3. Click Comment following the user’s entry.

4. Type a comment in the Comment text box.

5. Click Add.

Discussion Board

Within any one course, you can have a discussion board for the whole course and additional private boards for groups of students. Instructors can set up group discussion boards using the Groups tool. The discussion board is divided into forums, within which an initial post and the series of replies to it exist as threads.
Task 8: How to create a forum

1. Go to Course Tools and click on Discussion Board.
2. Click on the discussion board course name.
3. Click Create Forum on the action bar.
4. In Forum information, enter a Name and Description.
5. Leave the Forum Availability and Forum Settings options as the default settings or change them as outlined below.
6. Click Submit.

Forum Settings

Instructors can change the settings for each forum when they create it, or afterwards using the forum’s drop-down options menu. Settings include:

- Whether to mark the discussion forum and/or threads, or to have no marking,
- Allowing students to create new threads,
- Whether or not students must enter their own thread before viewing other threads in a forum (‘post first’),
- Allowing students to make anonymous posts,
- Allowing students to delete or edit their own posts,
- Allowing members to subscribe to the forum and threads (i.e. get email notifications of new posts),
Task 9: How to start a thread in a forum

1. Navigate to the Discussion board
2. From the Discussions page, click the name of the forum to which you want to add a thread.
3. Click Create Thread on the action bar.
4. Add a Subject for the thread.
5. Add your Message.
6. Click Submit.
**Task 10: How to reply to threads**

1. Navigate to the Discussion board, then click on the *forum name*.
2. On the forum page, click the name of the *thread*.
3. Click the *Reply* button under the relevant area to respond to it.
4. Type your reply.
5. Click *Submit*.

The Forum page can be viewed in either List view or Tree view.

- In list view, threads are presented in table format.
- Tree view shows both the thread starter messages and their replies. You can collapse and expand the replies in view.

In both views, threads containing any unread posts are displayed in bold type. Users can flag important posts and mark threads as read or unread using a drop-down menu.

They can also gather posts onto one page using the Collect function, then sort, filter or print them.

Users can toggle between the two views using the buttons at the top right of the page.

Discussion boards are hierarchical in structure. Use the breadcrumb path at the top of the window to move through the different parts of the discussion board.

**Blogs**

A Learn blog is only accessible via a Learn course. Blogs within Learn, whilst automatically private to EASE, are public to all course takers. **Types of blogs**

- **Course blogs**: You can create a course blog and choose the topic. All course members can add blog entries and comment on blog entries.
- **Individual blogs**: Students can add entries only to their own blogs. All other course members can view and add comments to it.
• **Group blogs**: If you enable the blogs tool for a group of users, they can perform these tasks:
  • Group members can add blog entries and make comments on blog entries, building upon one another.

All course members can view group blogs, but non-group members can only add comments.

**Task 11: How to create a blog**

You must create blog topics before students can add their entries. You can create more than one blog topic for students to add entries about different subjects. 1. Go to Control Panel > Course Tools > Blogs

2. Select **Create Blog**.
3. Type a name and optional instructions.
4. Set **Blog Availability** to yes

5. If required select the **Display After** and **Display Until** check boxes to enable the date and time selections. (Display restrictions don’t affect the blog availability, only when it appears.)

6. In the Blog Participation section, decide if the blog is for **Individuals** or the **Course**. You may also **Allow Anonymous Comments**.
7. In the Blog Settings section, select Monthly or Weekly Index Entries.

8. Optionally, select check boxes to Allow Users to Edit and Delete Entries, or Delete Comments.

9. In the Mark Settings section, select No marking.

10. Select Submit.

**Task 12: How to create blog entries**

1. On the Blogs listing page, select a blog title.

2. On the blog's topic page, select Create Blog Entry.

3. Type a Title and Entry Message.

4. Select Post Entry.

**Task 13: How to comment on a blog entry**

1. On the Blogs listing page, select a blog title.

2. Select a user's name in the list in the sidebar to view a blog entry.

3. Select Comment below the user's entry and type a comment.

4. Select Add.
Linking to tools

You can provide links to tools in course content areas and folders.

For Wikis/Blogs/Journal/Discussion pages a link can go to the whole board/page, which centralises all the items in the course.

Task 14: How to create a link to a page in a course content area or folder

1. Select the content area or folder where you want to add the tool.
2. From the action bar, select Tools then select the appropriate tool.
3. Select Link to the Wikis/Blogs/Journal/Discussion Board, Page as required.
   For Blogs and Discussion pages a link can go to an individual blog or forum.
4. Click Next
5. On the following page, leave the Link name as it is, and the text box blank.
6. Leave the Options as the default settings.
7. Click Submit.