Tuesday’s Tidbits

Discussion Forum Post Expectations

When taking an online class, discussion forum postings are a large part of the course, as they replace the discussion that would take place in the classroom. Their purpose is to not only establish and build on a sense of classroom community but to also share knowledge and make others think and respond to your ideas and thoughts as happens in the classroom.

Your instructors expect your posts to be substantive; in other words, a discussion post (including initial posts or reply posts) should include appropriate foundation knowledge, be factual, contain supporting examples, and enhance the ongoing dialogue. However, rather than just reporting what someone else has stated, the learner should demonstrate application and/or reflection of knowledge such that the meaning of the material is enhanced.

Additionally, discussion forum posts should contain examples and citations when appropriate, and your instructors expect them to be in APA format. This means that you need to include an in text citation with information that is not your own and a complete reference for the source cited in your in text citation.

Here is an example of a discussion forum post using APA format:

Social contracts are created by humans for cooperative reasons, but also for individual benefit (Waller, 2011). One example of this is the regulation of using a car. If we had not made rules which tell us how to drive on public roads, we would probably have a lot more accidents, and I would probably not get to class on time. So obeying those rules benefits society, but I also obey them because the results benefit me.

We also trust that others will abide by the social contract as well. We trust that others will obey traffic laws (the social contract), and that benefits us all in the long run. "Thus, a system of morality in which we honor agreements and cooperate with others is beneficial for each of us, and it is in my long term self interest to honor it" (Waller, 2011, p. 136).

Reference:

In addition to applying or reflecting on your knowledge of the topic and using correct APA formatting, you should also consider the content of your post. According to Connor (n.d.), words are all you have to express yourself in an online environment, so you need to be careful with them. How others perceive you will be based on what you say, so review your written posts and responses to ensure that you’ve expressed exactly what you intended. Use this as an opportunity to practice your proofreading, revision, and rewriting skills—valuable assets in the professional world for which you are now preparing (Connor, n.d.). Elevate your writing by not writing and spelling the way you do when you text or email a friend; this is not professional writing.

Discussion forum posts should expand on the thoughts and ideas that precede them, contain thoughtfully chosen words, and give credit to the sources of information used to prepare them. Using proper netiquette (network etiquette) and citation shows that you are a professional and care about how you present yourself to others.

Reference