

## The ABC's of Discussion Board Responses

Discussion boards are a significant element in the teaching and learning process between instructors and students. It is through the discussions where students have the opportunity to exchange ideas with one another and where you, as the instructor, are able to build from the material to make relevant connections. Consider using a mental checklist, with the mnemonic cue, ABC, in your discussion board responses with students. It may also be helpful to share this "ABCs" mnemonic strategy with your students for them to apply in engaging with their peers.

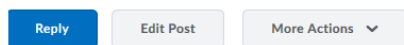
The ABC mnemonic is:

**A:** *Acknowledge* the contributions of the person to whom you are responding

**B:** *Build* on the ideas of the original poster by adding your own thoughts or analysis

**C:** *Contribute* to the discussion by asking a probing question that deepens understanding of the material and/or provide a supplemental resource

Here is one example of the ABC's of discussion board responses in action:



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Re: Vertical Search Engine  
May 18, 2018 9:54 AM

Nicole,

Interesting example with Yahoo Local. Local search strategy is definitely different than general SEO strategy, as there are many aspects of local search that are unique, from an SEO ranking signal perspective. Earlier this year, Search Engine Land reported on a study of a local search and found that under 40% of local searchers are starting with a traditional search engine. What was most interesting however was the role that reviews played in the local search role.

What are your thoughts on sites that focus on reviews as a vertical search engine? Do sites like Yelp compliment or compete with traditional search engines when it comes to local search?

- A** The instructor **acknowledges** this student's specific contributions
- B** The instructor **builds** upon the ideas the student included, including professional expertise and knowledge of current events
- C** The instructor **contributes** to the discussion further by asking the student to look at the concept with another perspective.

This technique can be used within and across disciplines, as each response should naturally acknowledge a student's post and extend the conversation beyond the baseline of the prompt.

Practicing the ABC approach with colleagues on your team, can be an excellent way to develop your skill with this strategy.