

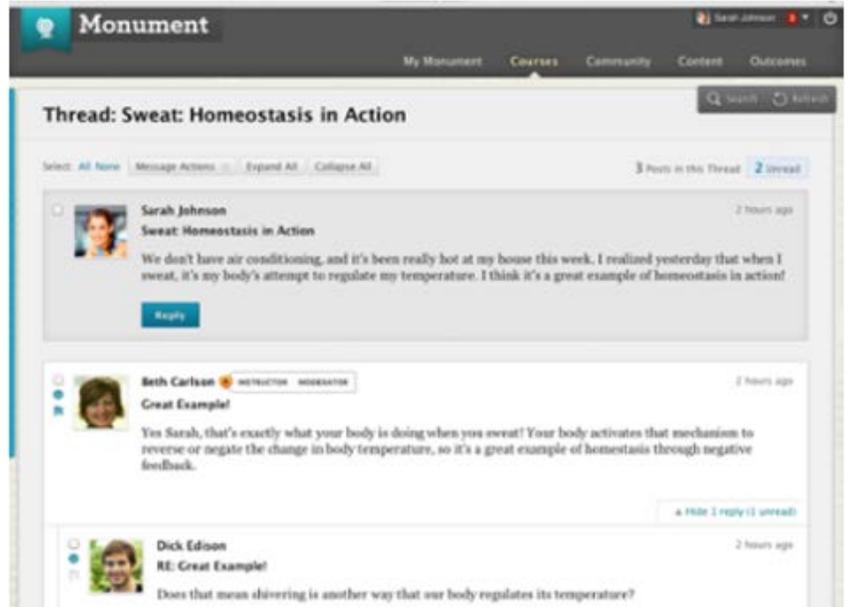
NEW DISCUSSION BOARD FEATURES IN BLACKBOARD LEARN+9

The Discussion Board creates a streamlined experience where users interact with each other in the same area where they discover content.

- **All posts on one page:** The entire discussion thread appears on a single page, thereby maintaining the context of posts and replies to one another.
- **Avatars:** The user profile avatars are more prominent in the new Discussions.
- **Conditional highlighting of instructors' posts:** It is easier for students to find posts from instructors in a sea of other posts.

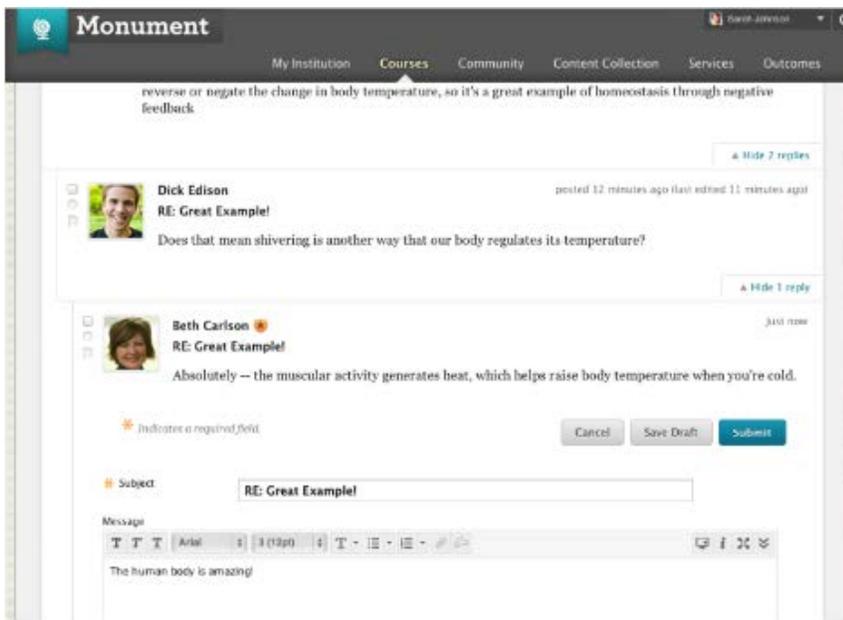
Respond to posts inline

When clicking "Reply", the content editor appears in the context of the discussion so as not to disrupt the flow of the user. The full content editor is available for the user to write a reply. When finished, submitting the post adds it directly into the page without losing context.



Post first feature

In addition to the user enhancements described above, we have also introduced a new setting that permits instructors to specify that students must enter their own thread before viewing other threads in a forum. (Note that initially this capability only applies at the forum level, not the thread level. This means that post first is not an option when students are not permitted to create threads.)



All Posts on One Page and Instructor Highlighting

The screenshot shows a discussion thread titled "Thread: Week 1: Discussion on Global Warming". At the top, a navigation bar includes "My Institution", "Courses", "Community", "Content Collection", "Services", and "Outcomes". A search bar and a refresh button are located in the top right corner, with a callout '1' pointing to the search bar. Below the navigation bar, the thread title is displayed. A callout '2' points to the "Expand All" and "Collapse All" buttons. To the right of the title, it says "3 Posts in this Thread" and "1 Unread", with a callout '3' pointing to the "1 Unread" indicator. The first post is by Beth Carlson, an instructor and manager, with a callout '5' pointing to her role labels. Her post title is "Week 1: Discussion on Global Warming" and it was posted "1 hour ago". A callout '4' points to her profile picture. The post content discusses global warming, and an overall rating of five stars is shown. A callout '6' points to the "Reply" and "Quote" buttons. The second post is by Sarah Johnson, with a callout '7' pointing to her profile picture. Her post title is "RE: Week 1: Discussion on Global Warming" and it was posted "1 hour ago". A callout '8' points to the "1 hour ago" timestamp. The post content discusses the warming trend, and an overall rating of four stars is shown. A callout '9' points to the overall rating stars.

1. The action bar (Grading, Moderation, Alignments, Subscribe/Unsubscribe, Search, and Refresh buttons) has been relocated to a new layer that appears when the user hovers over the body of the page. This change was made to increase the amount of vertical screen space available for viewing posts.
2. Two new functions are now available at the top of the page: Expand All and Collapse All. These buttons help the user manage the visibility of the posts on the page with a single click. Note that the existing batch actions are still available as well.
3. The number of unread messages is prominently displayed at the top right, along with the total number of posts. Clicking on this takes the user to a collection (based on current functionality) that only contains the posts marked as unread in the current thread.
4. A larger version of the user's avatar is displayed.
5. The user's course role and forum role are displayed for users whose forum role is either manager or moderator. If the institution has set up custom roles for instructors or TAs, for example, this information is displayed. This highlight is only available within the discussion board at this time., highlighting of discussion board posts within the Bb Stream will be available in a future Learn release.
6. The ability to reply in-line is available to all posts. See below for more information about this new user experience.
7. There is a new Marked as Read icon. When this icon is blue, this indicates that the post has not yet been read; conversely, when the icon is white, the post has been read. Posts are marked as read automatically as the user scrolls down the page. Only posts that are viewed on screen and expanded get automatically marked as read, and only after a slight delay (i.e. users will not automatically mark all posts as 'read' by quickly scrolling down the page). The user may choose to manually override a post that is marked as read automatically.
8. Post dates are now displayed as relative dates. When the user hovers, a layer appears that provides the absolute date of creation and edit, as well as the number of views.
9. The rating displays the average rating for a given post, if the Rate Posts feature is turned on. When the user hovers, this changes to show the rating provided, or to be provided, by the user.

10. When copying, importing or exporting discussion board course material, you can decide whether or not to add starter posts for each thread in each forum (anonymously) to the package.
11. **Accessibility:** The new experience of reading a thread is simple to consume with screen reader technology. We also removed clutter on the page, so screen reader and keyboard-only users have less to sift through as they navigate the interface.