Note: This tutorial covers advanced discussion board features- refer to the Basic Topics tutorial for introductory information, additional Discussion Board options and features.

Forum View Tools

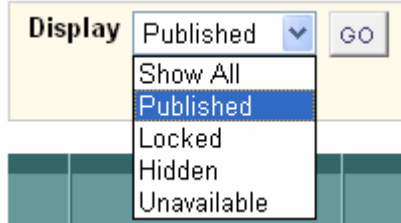In Forum View, the top toolbar offers several options for managing forum threads.

Thread	Creates new thread.
Remove	Remove selected threads from the forum. Deleted threads cannot be restored. Note: As an alternative, threads may be marked with an unavailable status to hide threads from users without actually removing the threads from the course.
Collect	Gathers selected threads into a single page where they can be sorted, filtered, or printed.
Lock	Allows threads to be read but not modified. Users cannot post to locked threads.
Unlock	Removes lock from thread
Grade Forum	*This option appears only if forum grading has been enabled.*
Moderate Forum	*This option appears only if forum moderation has been enabled.*
Change Status to	Modifies the status of the selected threads. Status types include: **Published:** A published thread is available to users and is the default status for posted threads. **Locked:** When locked, users may read the thread but may not make any additions or modifications to it. An instructor might choose to lock threads during the grading process to prevent users from updating or changing posts. **Unlocked:** Unlocks a previously locked thread allowing users to modify and add to it. **Hidden:** Hidden threads are not displayed and may not be modified. An instructor might choose to hide old, out of date threads rather than remove them. **Unavailable:** When unavailable, users can no longer view the thread. Instructors or forum managers can view unavailable threads by specifically choosing to display these threads.

Forum View Tools (continued)

Note: To see threads with other status types, change the Display type and click **GO**.

Thread Detail Tools

In Thread Detail view, the top toolbar offers several options for managing the individual postings in a thread.

Collect	Selected posts are grouped together on a new page allowing them to be filtered, sorted or printed.
Flag	Marks post with red flag icon which appears next to the thread's selection box.
Unflag	Remove a flag applied to a post.
Grade Thread	Enter a grade for a user based on their performance in the thread. *This option only appears if thread grading has been enabled.*
Moderate Forum	Allows user to review a post and approve it (publish) or reject it (return). *This option only appears if forum moderation has been enabled and you have a forum role of Manager (Instructor) or Moderator.*

Thread Detail Tools (continued)

Within the Thread Content area, the following choices are available:

Reply	Generate a response to a post.
Modify	Change the content of the post. *This option only appears if the setting to allow authors to modify own posts has been enabled.*
Remove	Remove the post (also removes all replies to that post). *This option only appears if the setting to allow authors to remove own posts has been enabled.*
Subscribe	Users receive an email alert when the thread is updated or a user posts a reply. *This option only appears if thread subscription has been enabled.*
Rate this Post	Allows users to select a score for the post based on a 1 to 5 scale. *This option only appears if the setting to allow members to rate posts has been enabled.*
Previous Post/Next Post	Used to navigate through the posts in the thread.

Peer Review

Allows students to rate other student's posts using a 5-star rating system.

1. Under Forum Settings, the instructor should select the **Allow members to rate posts** option if it is not already selected.

Rating Discussion Board Posts (Student process)

2. Open the forum link and thread. On the far right side of the post an Overall Rating field appears.

3. Click on the **Rate this Post** drop down list and select a rating from 0 to 5 stars. Click **Rate**.

4. The student's rating will now be included in the **Overall Rating** and will appear in the **Rate this Post** field. Students may not rate the same post more than once.
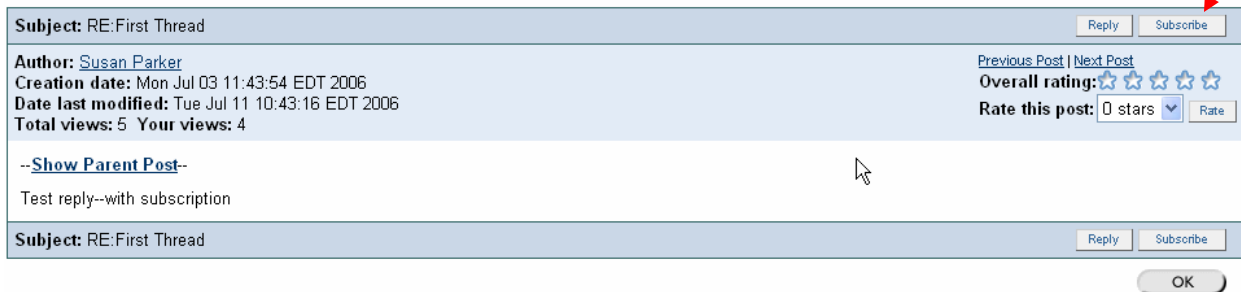
Thread Subscription

Thread Subscription allows students to receive email notification (sent to their CMICH account) whenever a forum thread is updated or replied to.

Note: The email notification does not contain the actual contents of the posting, users must still login to Blackboard to view the posting. Notices are emailed only when an update or reply is made to a first level thread in a forum — email is not sent for updates or replies to second level postings. (For example: notice is not sent on a reply to a reply).

1. Under Forum Settings, the instructor should select the **Allow members to subscribe to posts** option if it is not already selected.
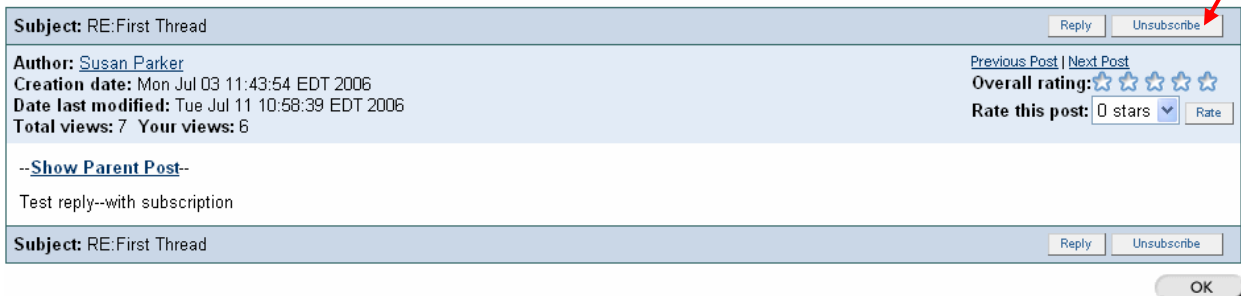
Subscribing to Thread (Student process)

2. Open the forum link and thread.

3. Click the Subscribe button (see below)

Unsubscribing to Thread (Student process)

1. Open the forum link and thread.

2. Click the Unsubscribe button (see sample below)

Forum Moderation
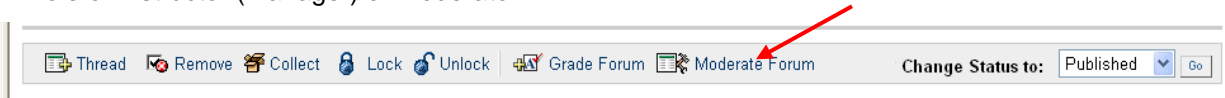
When forum moderation is selected all posts must be reviewed by another individual before the item is posted and viewable by the remainder of the class. Normally, the instructor takes responsibility for approving/rejecting posts unless a forum moderator has been named on the Manage Forum Users page.

1. Under Forum Settings, the instructor should select the **Force Moderation of Posts** option if it is not already selected.

2. After students have completed posting to the forum, open the forum and select **Moderate Forum** from the Toolbar. The **Moderate Forum** button will only appear in the action bar if you have a forum role of Instructor (Manager) or Moderator.

3. The Moderation Queue will appear with a list of posts that are awaiting approval. (The screen sample below shows four posts waiting in the queue)

4.

Post	Author	Date	
RE:First Thread	Sue Parker	Tue Jul 11 10:59:14 EDT 2006	Moderate
RE:First Thread	Sue Parker	Tue Jul 11 11:04:24 EDT 2006	Moderate
RE:RE:First Thread	Sue Parker	Tue Jul 11 10:43:15 EDT 2006	Moderate
RE:RE:Third Thread	Sue Parker	Tue Jul 11 10:24:29 EDT 2006	Moderate

OK

5. Click **Moderate**. The Moderate Post page will appear with the message. (see below)
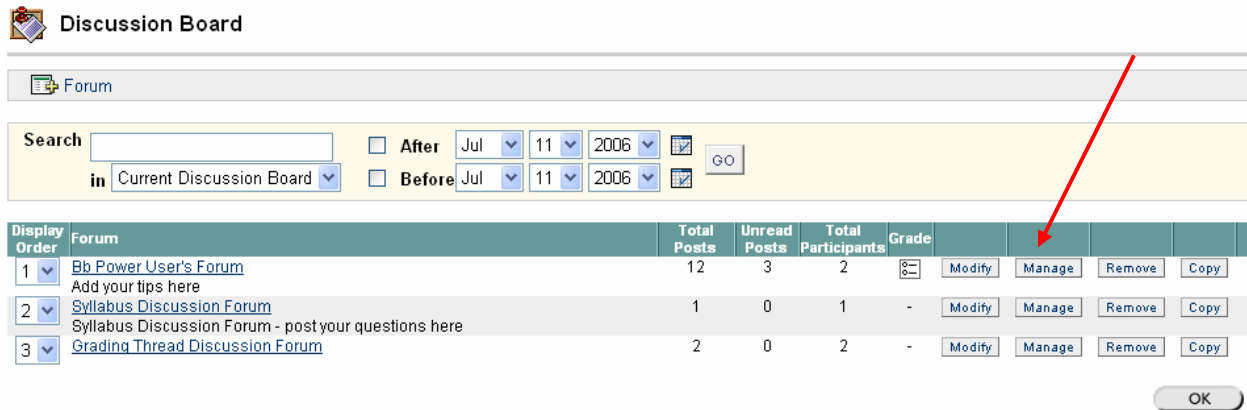
Forum Moderation (continued)

4. In the middle section of the screen, select **Publish** (approve the post) or **Return** (reject the post). When returning the post, it's helpful to include a message to explain why the post is being returned along with some suggestions for improving the post.

5. Click **Submit**. If the post was published (approved) it will now appear in the forum. If the post was returned (not approved) it will only appear to the author and the Instructor or Moderator in the forum. The post will be marked returned and the Moderator comments when returning the post will appear as a reply.

Managing User Roles

Several different roles exist for users participating within a discussion board. By default, instructors are given a Manager role,
To assign a role:

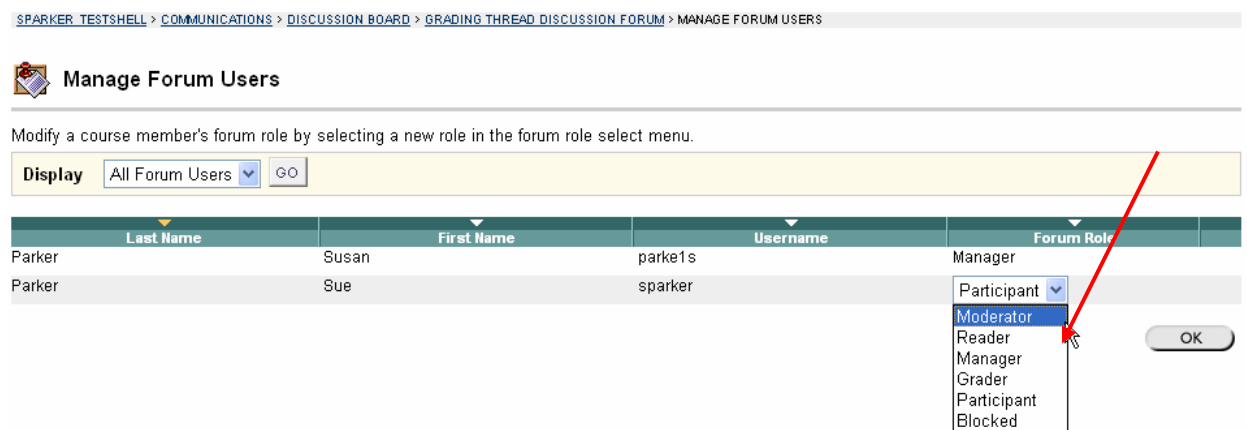1. Open the Discussion Board area and click the Manage button of the desired forum.

2. The Manage Forum Users page will appear.

3. Select a role for the desired user from the drop-down list. The default value is Participant. Participants can read and post but have no administrative privileges

4. Click **OK**. The forum roles are now assigned

Participant: Default role for students. Participants can read and post, but have no other privileges.
Moderator: Default role for Course Builder. Moderators can review/reject posts, and delete and modify posts.
Reader: Readers may view forum threads and replies, but cannot add any content.
Manager: Default role for instructors and TA's, the Manager role allows complete control over the forum and threads, forum settings, post moderation and grading.
Grader: Graders may review posts and enter grades but cannot modify postings or settings.
Blocked: Blocked users are prevented from accessing the forum.

Viewing Discussion Board Statistics

The Performance Dashboard keeps track of user activity throughout the course, including the Discussion Board.

1. Click Performance Dashboard on the Control Panel.

2. Under the Discussion Board column, click the link to display the forum information for a user.

3. A page appears that lists the following information:

    □ Total Posts (click on link to see a grouping of posts)
    □ Date of Last Post
    □ Average Post Length (number of characters)
    □ Minimum Post Length (number of characters)
    □ Maximum Post Length (number of characters)
    □ Average Post Position
    □ Grade (if used and the post is not yet graded, a link to the Gradebook will appear to add a grade)