



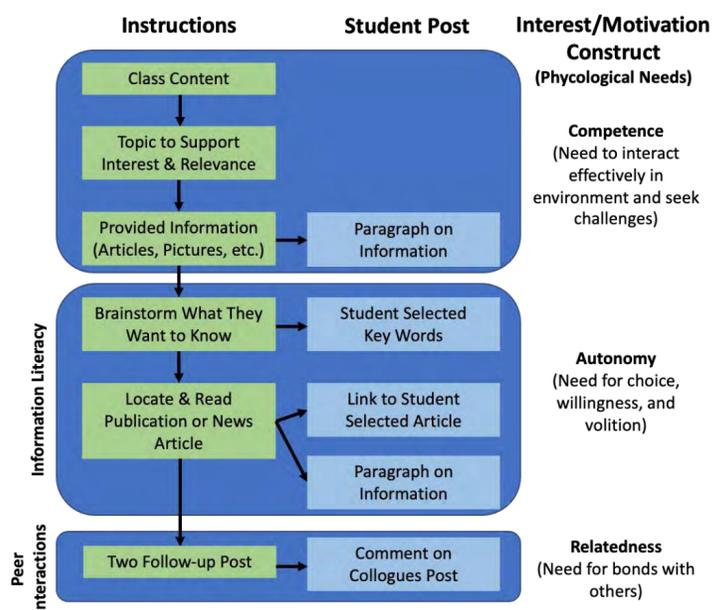
Adaptable Online Discussion Format to Increase Student Interest, Peer Interactions, and Information Literacy

Kristy J. Wilson, College of Arts and Sciences, Marian University Indianapolis, 3200 Cold Spring Rd, Indianapolis, IN 46222

BACKGROUND

Online instruction poses several challenges including creating opportunities for students to interact and get to know each other. I will discuss an adaptable online discussion format that has students explore the real-world implications of course context and diversity issues and allow students to build the classroom community. The discussion format utilizes current events and elements of students' daily lives to increase student interest in course content.

ADAPTABLE DISCUSSION FORMAT



See information on Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000)

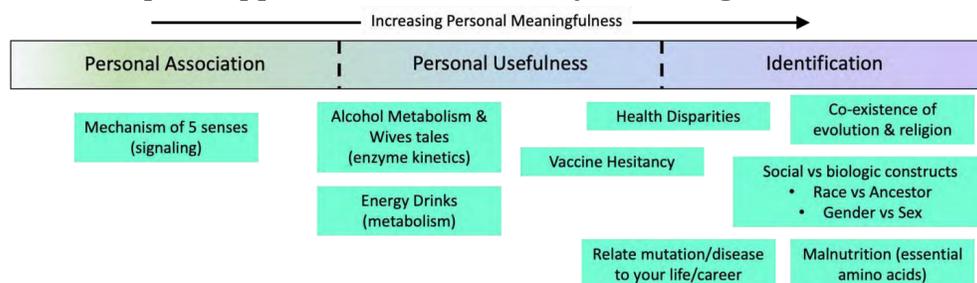
DISCUSSION RUBRIC

Criteria	Ratings					
Initial Post Quality	10 pts- Fully answering question with complete and justified answers	8 pts- Completed assignment above minimum requirements.	6 pts- Complete assignment but did not attempt to go further.	4 pts- Poor attempt that failed to address portions of the assignment.	2 pts- Minimal attempt that failed to address major portions of the assignment.	0 pts- No initial post
Initial Post Timeliness	3 pts- Posted Thursday	2 pts- Posted Friday	1 pts- Posted Saturday	0 pts- Posted Sunday		
Follow-Up	4 pts- Provide significant, meaningful, and well reasoned responses.	3 pts- Provides partial or incomplete responses that still contributes to conversation.	2 pts- Provided trivial or non-helpful comments to topic.	1 pt- Provided off topic response	0 pts- Did not participate	
Follow-Up Participation	3 points- Posted 2 replies before Sunday	2 points- Posted 1 reply before Sunday	0 points- Did not post follow-up			

Rubric from (Jones, 2020)

STUDENTS EXPLORE DIVERSE INTERESTS ON TOPICS

Discussion Topics Support Student Interest by Providing Relevance to Content



See information on Relevance Continuum (Priniski et al, 2018)

Discussion Prompt on Malnutrition

This is a graded discussion: 20 points possible due -

Discussion: Essential Amino Acids and Malnutrition
Kristy Wilson

Purpose: The goal of this assignment is to apply what we are learning about proteins to complex real world problems.

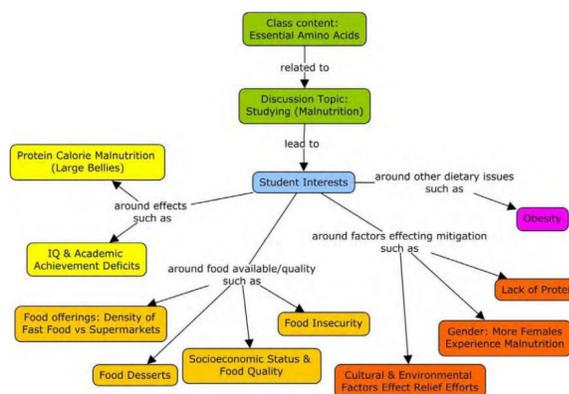
Topic: We have discussed essential amino acids in this section and will explore the broader relevance of malnutrition in the US and around the world. [Read article \(Semba, R.D., Shardtelli, M., Sakar, Ashour, F. A. et al \(2016\) Child Stunting is Associated with Low Circulating Essential Amino Acids. EBio Medicine 6:246-252.\)](#) on one outcome of malnutrition from essential amino acids known as stunting as well as a summary infographic.

Instructions:

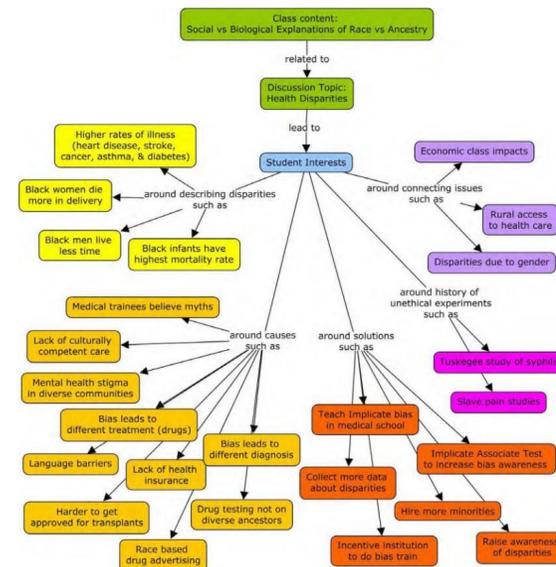
1. Read the above paper and infographic and write into the post "What I Know" about essential amino acids and stunting which is one outcome of malnutrition.
2. Brainstorm "What I Want to Know" about malnutrition to extend your understanding by looking at different types of malnutrition, prevalence of malnutrition (where/why is it happening), food insecurity, food deserts, or other related topics. Write your possible search terms in your post.
3. Use your search terms to find a news article or scientific publication and copy and paste the link into the post.
4. Write into post "What I Learned" from your news article or scientific publication.
5. Reply to 2 posts: How has your colleague's post made you aware of or think differently about malnutrition occurring here in the US or around the world?

Grading: Refer to the attached rubric for grading criteria. To view the rubric click on [icon] at the top right of this discussion and select Show Rubric.
Original post due: Thursday (this is the due date of the assignment)
Replies to posts due: Sunday (this will be on your calendar)

Students Explore a Wide Range of Topics around Malnutrition



Students Explore a Wide Range of Topics around Health Disparities



Example Student Post from Health Disparities

What I Know: Racial bias in the United States has allowed black Americans to be undertreated for pain when compared to white Americans. Studies have confirmed that racial bias among white physicians and medical students have made black patients suffer in pain without treatment or medication because they believe that the black body is biologically different. Some examples of this would be the beliefs that black skin is thicker than white people's skin and that black people have a higher tolerance for pain than white people. These racially biased beliefs about black Americans have created health disparities that have made treatments for pain less attainable for black patients.

What I Want to Know: How has racial bias affected access to treatments for disease?

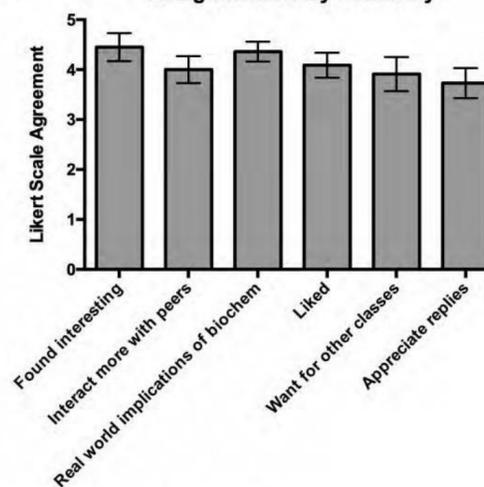
My search terms were: racial bias and access to treatment, racial bias and disease

What I Learned: [Racial bias and discrimination may negatively impact heart disease care, risk factors | American Heart Association](#)

After reading the article about the negative effect of racial bias on heart disease treatments, I learned that race can affect the heart disease treatments that are prescribed for African Americans and African immigrants. A study, that was published in the Journal of the American Heart Association, found that it was more difficult for African Americans to get approved for a heart transplant. The study consisted of 422 physicians, nurses, and other hospital workers determining, from patient photos and patient health records, whether hypothetical black male and white male patients should be referred for a heart transplant. It was found that this group of reviewers saw black patients as less healthy, less likely to comply with follow-up care recommendations, and less trustworthy. This meant that black patients were less likely to be recommended for heart transplants and it was found that they were more likely to be recommended for ventricular assist devices instead of heart transplants. This study is another example of how racial bias and discrimination has created unequal access to healthcare for black patients.

VERY POSITIVE RESPONSE TO DISCUSSIONS

A. Biochemistry Students Rated Discussion Assignments Very Positively



B. Most Valuable Aspect of Discussions: Theme: Learning other's point of view (n = 8)

Example Quote: "Understanding other's points of view."

Theme: Connecting to examples/current events (n=4)
Example Quote: "The most valuable aspect was connecting what we are learning to actual research going on."

Theme: Explore own interest (n=2)
Example Quote: "Writing original posts gives you time to research things on your own and look at the topic it whatever way you want..."

CONCLUSIONS & FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- Discussion format is appropriate for students at different educational levels (freshman, juniors/seniors)
- Discussion topics can be related to content and/or social issues then considered along a relevance continuum
- Student response to discussion format has been overwhelmingly positive
- Create new discussions in content areas, societal issues, and diversity topics
- Place discussions on a website to increase access

REFERENCES

1. Wilson KJ. (2021) *Online discussions in biochemistry to increase peer interactions and student interest*. *Biochem Mol Bio Educ*. 49(2): 298-300.
2. Priniski, S.J., Hecht, C.A, Harackiewicz, J.M. (2018) *Making Learning Personally Meaningful: A New Framework for Relevance Research*. *J Exp Educ*. 86(1): 11-29.
3. Harackiewicz, J.M., Canning, E.A., Tibbetts, Y., Priniski, S.J., Hyde, J.S. (2016) *Closing achievement gaps with a utility-value intervention: disentangling race and social class*. *J Pers Soc Psychol*. 111:745-65.