Understanding Forums

As you begin using Sakai’s Forum tool, it is important to have a conceptual understanding of how discussions are organized.

- **FORUM** – Represents the top level of the discussion hierarchy (e.g. Week One, Unit One, etc.) and can be thought of as the room your instructor might reserve to hold a discussion.
- **TOPIC** – Represents the mid-level in the discussion hierarchy (e.g. Chapter One Questions) and be thought of as the questions your instructor would write on the board for you to discuss.
- **CONVERSATION** – Represents the lower-level of the discussion hierarchy and would represent the conversation that took place around each topic (you view Conversations by clicking on the Topic title).

Posting to an Online Forums Discussion

1. Click on the Forums link on the left tool bar.
2. Click the “Read full Description” link under the appropriate Forum/Topic to information provided by your instructor.
3. To begin the discussion, click on the appropriate Topic (e.g. Class Introductions).
4. To add your initial posting, click the “Start a new conversation” button on the top menu bar.
   a. **TIP:** Click the Printer Icon for a printer friendly version of the entire discussion Conversation.
5. Enter a title and then the message text using the Rich Text Editor.
   a. **WARNING:** If you are copying text from MS Office, be sure to use the “Paste from Word” button ( ) to avoid getting garbled symbols in your posting.
6. If desired, attach a file using the “Add Attachment” button.
7. When you are finished, click the “Post” button.

Reading and Replying to Forums Postings

1. Click on the title of a particular Conversation (e.g. Hello from…) to see the original posting and all of the associated replies.
2. To reply to a message, click the “Reply” button ( ) on the right side of the screen.
3. Enter in a title and text of your reply and then click the “Post” button.
4. **TIP:** Once you read a message click the small envelope icon ( ) to mark it as “read”. Alternatively, click the “Mark All as Read” button on the top menu bar to mark all of the messages on the screen as being read. This will help you know which messages you need to read the next time you sign into your course.