

# Smart Ways to Deal With E-learning Forums



# Smart Ways to Deal With E-learning Forums

E-learning forums – you tend to love them, or hate them.

Some students just love electronic discussion boards.

They see e-learning forums as a natural extension of emails and texting.

And they get real value out of talking to other learners –it’s a great way to avoid feeling lonely online.

But other students really hate e-learning forums.

They seriously resent having to post online comments, and see the whole thing as a total waste of time.

## How do you feel about e-learning forums?

If you love using electronic discussion boards, you’re already getting the full benefits of this side of online learning.

Great!

But if you’re not a big fan, read on.

E-learning forums are often a compulsory part of your course.

They function as virtual tutorials that can help deepen your understanding of the course material.

Even so, it’s easy to put off posting your responses, isn’t it?

And there are 4 common reasons for that.

Let’s take a look at how to get around these obstacles, and reap the full benefits of contributing to online discussions.

## The Four Most Common E-learning Forum Problems – and How to Deal with Them!

### 1. Fear of looking stupid

What if you post a message that shows you don’t “get” a key concept?

What if you make a complete fool of yourself?

#### The smart way to deal with this problem:

This fear doesn’t really have legs, and here’s why.

When you learn online, chances are you'll never actually meet most of your fellow students, or your tutor. So why worry about making a fool of yourself in front of people you don't even know?

Think about it: no-one's watching you – e-learning means an end to performance anxiety!

## **2. Your answer might be “wrong”**

What if you're totally on the wrong track with your response?

What if you haven't answered the question correctly?

### **The smart way to deal with this problem:**

Understand that e-learning forums are not exams.

They give you the chance to *discuss* topics and ideas.

There's usually a very broad spectrum of “right” answers out there – mostly your tutor is looking for evidence that you've given the key concepts some thought.

In discussions like these, there are generally no “right” or “wrong” answers – just useful contributions.

## **3. The technology side of e-learning forums is nerve-wracking**

What button do you click to post your message?

How do you know if it's live? How do you delete a message?

Arrgh – the technology is scary!

### **The smart way to deal with this problem:**

Have you ever posted a message in an online forum on the internet?

E-learning forums are pretty much the same thing.

The technology is no more complicated than texting or sending an email, either.

If you need some help with the technical side of things, there are three places you can go for help:

- Your student starter pack, which may include detailed instructions on how to post a message
- Online help screens, or the tutorials available through your Learning Management System
- The IT Help Desk – these guys help with queries like this all the time.

Post a message or two, and you'll learn first-hand how easy it is.

And now you know that if you *do* need some help with the details, there's plenty available.

#### **4. You think electronic discussion boards are a waste of time**

Isn't this just more work to do, another demand on your time?  
And what's the point of it, anyway?

##### **The smart way to deal with this problem:**

It helps to understand the function of e-learning forums in your course.

They're partly an attempt to replace the face-to-face tutorials you get in traditional learning. They give learners the chance to discuss the material, and interact. They're not perfect, it's true.

But they do offer a genuine opportunity to dig a little deeper into the material you're studying, to offer your own ideas on it and to benefit from hearing what other learners think. The process can really develop your understanding of the topic.

And posting on a forum is not the same as writing an essay. You'll normally be expected to write about a paragraph. It doesn't have to take a lot of time.

E-learning forums don't have to be source of stress.

They have a useful function, and they can add an extra dimension to your learning experience.

And now you know some smart, practical ways of getting the most out of this aspect of online learning!

