

## **Discussion boards as a platform for sharing composition assignments**

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### **1) Abstract**

Most learning management systems feature online discussion forums, allowing students and instructors to communicate asynchronously outside of class meetings. However, beyond their ability to exchange text messages, most also include the option of attaching small files to user posts. It has also become common for audio software to export projects as MP3 files, a file format that today's students are very familiar with. These two technologies, discussion boards and MP3 files, can be easily combined to implement a powerful system for tracking student progress on music composition and audio production assignments.

### **2) Setup**

- A. Create a forum or discussion board – Options for editing and new threads
- B. Populate with threads for each student – Use student's name as subject

### **3) Posting**

- A. Export audio project as MP3 or convert bounce using utility software
  - i. Examples: Logic, ProTools LE, Amadeus Pro, Peak, Sibelius
- B. Post message to discussion thread, include comments and questions
- C. Attach MP3 file to post, submit to the forum
- D. Test to make sure file plays back properly

### **4) Listening**

- A. Log on to forum area, look for threads that have unread messages
- B. Expand thread, view posts, click on attachment
  - i. Most browsers support playback, download optional
- C. Use reply function to post your comments and suggestions

## **5) Extensions**

- A. Peer critiques can be completed as responses within a thread
- B. Collection function allows posts to be archived for reference (print as PDF)
- C. Files can be loaded to iPod for on-the-go listening, automated (AppleScript)
- D. Respond with excerpts to illustrate points (MP3 Trimmer)

## **6) Benefits**

- A. Accessed via any computer with an internet connection
- B. Facilitates critiques between class meetings, accelerating revision cycle
- C. All correspondence is time stamped, easy to review history
- D. Creates a basic backup in case original project files are lost

## **7) Possible Improvements**

- A. BlackBoard support for RSS feeds
- B. Separate, linkable media management