Digital Discussion Tips

Effective Online Discussion Prompts
• Provoke a variety of valid responses
• Encourage participants to support their opinions with reasons
• Require deep thinking about the content

Setting up Online Discussions
• Provide instruction in appropriate responses, such as keeping postings focused and brief, looking for shared opinions, disagreeing agreeably, and asking clarification questions.
• Model quality responses.
• Teach students to create and change subject lines to give readers an idea of the topic of a post.
• Require multiple postings by each student.
• Provide guidelines or assessment instruments, linked from the discussion, if possible, for students to use to assess their own comments.
• Set up multiple due dates, so that students have posts to respond to.

Facilitating Online Discussions
• Visit the discussion frequently to stay informed about the interactions
• Deal with mild issues in a general way by posting general reminders.
• Refrain from expressing personal opinions.
• Make a point of drawing attention to thoughtful posts and good questions.
• Deal with serious issues in individual meetings, face-to-face, if possible,