

Examples of Discussion Forum Initial Posts

Three examples of Discussion Forum initial posts are presented below—one for an undergraduate course, one for a graduate course, and one for a doctoral course.

Undergraduate

The following is an example of an initial post in response to a Discussion Question in an undergraduate Discussion Forum.

DQ: Discuss the relationship between the capabilities or characteristics of conceptualization and foresight in leaders.

Spears (2004), in his contribution to the book *Practicing Servant-Leadership: Succeeding Through Trust, Bravery, and Forgiveness*, asked servant-leaders to "seek to nurture their abilities to 'dream great dreams.' Conceptualization is the ability to look at a problem (or an organization) from a conceptualizing perspective meaning that one must think beyond day-to-day realities" (pp. 10–11). Leaders with strong conceptualization skills create dreams for their organizations and their future (Spears, 2004). Conceptualization is the ability or personal characteristic that allows a leader to take a giant mental step back and take a hard look at the big picture. It is also the ability to analyze that big picture and plot its course in the proper direction. This skill is very hard to do because, as Spears go on to say, "the traditional manager is focused on the need to achieve short-term operational goals" (p. 23). For most of us, that short-term pressure and stress prevent us from taking that step back, seeing the vision for what it is, and conceptualizing a clear path to that vision's end.

When we include the concept of foresight, we see that it is very similar and usually a requirement of conceptualization. Spears (2004) simply says that foresight is "the ability to foresee the likely outcome of a situation, and that it is a characteristic that enables the servant leader to understand the lessons from the past, the realities of the present, and the likely consequences of a decision for the future" (p. 19). When a leader can take that mental step back from the stresses and demands of the present in order to conceptualize how the vision needs to be accomplished, he needs to do so using the skill of foresight. That leader must be able to not just dream up creative and inspiring ways to press into the future, but also must be able to analyze the past and present to discover what the probable outcome of that course of action will be. *Fortune Magazine* named the CEO of Apple Inc., Steve Jobs, "CEO of the decade" (Lashinsky, 2009, para. 5). Without a doubt, he earned that distinction because of his incredible ability to take a step back and see the big picture of not just where his company was going, but where his entire industry was going. He did this so well that his vision has become the standard in most American households, embodied in the form of an "iDevice." His ability to conceptualize his desired outcomes, foresee those results, and then the results of those results, has forever changed the face of personal computing and personal communication. In my opinion, he is a perfect example of these two skills alive and observable today.

References

Lashinsky A. (2009, November 5). The decade of Steve: How Apple's imperious, brilliant CEO transformed American business. *Fortune Magazine*.
http://money.cnn.com/2009/11/04/technology/steve_jobs_ceo_decade.fortune/

Spears, L. C. (2004). Understanding and practice of servant-leadership. In L. C. Spears & M. Lawrence (Eds.), *Practicing servant-leadership: Succeeding through trust, bravery, and forgiveness* (pp. 9–24). Jossey-Bass.

Graduate

The following is an example of an initial post in response to a Discussion Question in a graduate Discussion Forum.

DQ: The Chen et al. (2002) article describes several ways to increase the value of an organization. Which of these might be applicable to your organizational and why?

Working for a not-for-profit health care facility that serves an ethnically diverse and growing community of 500,000 people certainly has its challenges. The organization that I work for offers a full spectrum of services including acute care, primary health, emergency care, behavioral health, and educational services. The organization like many other health care facilities has felt the impact of new CMS reimbursement changes and well as managed care payment changes. According Chen et al. (2002), there are two specific things that my organization is involved in regarding increasing value share—investment opportunities or expansion and acquisition/merger. The facility I work for is looking to build a new ambulatory surgical facility that will also house other outpatient specialty clinics and offices. This facility is to be completed by the end of 2012 and will bring much needed outpatient and surgical services to a fast-growing community that only has two hospitals serving 500,000 people. The hospital currently has an overburdened surgical department within the hospital because it cannot keep up with the demands of services needed within the community. The organization is responding to the community's needs and by

doing so will also grow and expand its resources, obtain competitive advantage, and increase value share. The other thing that the hospital has been looking into is merging with another very large health care system already serving the expanded and surrounding communities. With the increases in health care costs, an aging population with increased health care needs, an increase in demand from health benefit plans to provide cost effective quality care, and the rising costs of technology with infrastructure, many hospitals today are finding it increasingly difficult to remain viable unless combining resources and finances with other large health care systems.

Reference

Chen, A. H., Conover, J. A., & Kensinger, J. W. (2002). Proven ways to increase share value. *Journal of Applied Finance*, 12(1), 89-98.

Doctoral

The following is an example of an initial post in response to a Discussion Question in a doctoral Discussion Forum.

DQ: Read the Cameron article and review the characteristics of a successful student provided in the lecture. As you consider these, which do you feel is your strongest characteristic as a scholarly practitioner? Why? Which is your weakest? What can you do to shore up your weakest characteristic to succeed in the doctoral program?

Successful students have the ability to establish goals and to work towards reaching those in a manner that requires great organizational skills, time management, determination, and the ability to ask questions and apply knowledge. Successful students also exhibit a combination of

successful attitudes and behaviors, as well as intellectual capacity (Cameron, n.d.). I feel I have several qualities of a successful student; however, many of them only came over time. I have always considered myself a leader, one with many talents and the ability to do anything that I put my mind and hands to. Although I possessed these skills, as a middle school and high school student between grades 7-10, I did not take my education as seriously as I should have. The eye-opener came when I did not graduate as one of the top 10% of my class. Once I entered college, I was determined to stay on top of my academics. As a result, I graduated with cum laude honors when I received my bachelor's degree and with a 3.8 GPA when I earned my master's degree. Therefore, my strongest characteristics as a scholarly practitioner have to be leadership, goal setting, and accomplishing the task at hand. Studies tell us that only 3% of people in the USA set goals, and they are among the wealthiest people in the nation (Ziglar, 2010). With that in mind, even after I complete my doctorate degree I will continue to make and pursue my goals and dreams.

Furthermore, my weakness has to be time management. Since I have several responsibilities and wear a number of "hats," I sometimes get overwhelmed. It is not that I do not complete my tasks—in fact, I often overwork myself. Others depend on me for many reasons. For example, I am a mother, wife, teacher, evangelist, singer, daughter, and leader in my extended family. Church business requires a lot from me, as I minister across the region. My school often has many needs, and as teacher of the year I must work to try to satisfy them. While pursuing my dream to earn my doctorate degree, I have come to realize that time management is a necessity. In order to shore up my weakness, I will prioritize and minimize some of my responsibilities. According to an article written by Dartmouth College (2008), time management provides you with the opportunity to create a schedule that works for you, not for others. Moreover, I must put

the things I need to do first. One of my pet peeves is not finishing what I started, so that will work in my favor as I succeed in completing the doctoral program at GCU.

References

Cameron, N. E. (n.d.). *Successful students*. University of Manitoba.

<http://www.umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts.economics/cameron/success.html>

Dartmouth College. (2008). *Managing your time*. <https://students.dartmouth.edu/academic-skills/learning-resources/time-management-tips>

Ziglar, Z. (2010, December 28). Set your goals, change your life & celebrate! *The Zig Ziglar Weekly Newsletter*. <http://www.ziglar.com/newsletter/?m=201012>