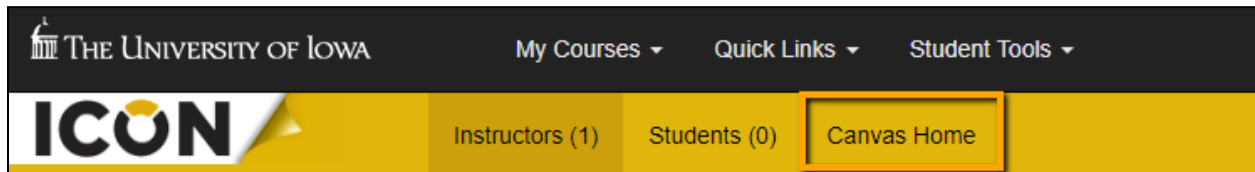


# ICON: Communication Tools

## Getting Ready:

1. **Log into <https://icon.uiowa.edu/>**
2. **Click on the Canvas Home tab.** If you have a notification banner at the top of your page, click to Accept. Go to your assigned training course.



## Follow up:

If you have questions regarding this instructional technology, please contact the ITS Help Desk at [its-helpdesk@uiowa.edu](mailto:its-helpdesk@uiowa.edu).

For future events and trainings, please refer to <https://teach.its.uiowa.edu/events/upcoming>.

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## PART ONE – Announcements

Announcements allow instructors to communicate with students about course activities and post interesting course-related topics. Announcements are designed to allow instructors to broadcast information out to all members of a course or to all members of sections within a course. As soon as you have created an Announcement, a notice is sent to students according to their preferred Notification Preferences. In your notification preferences, you can choose to receive notifications for announcements created by you as well as any replies to announcements you've created.

Use Announcements to:

- Remind your students what they need to accomplish to stay on track.
- Point students to internal and external resources that will help them achieve course Outcomes.
- Leave a message for the entire class with video or audio comments.
- Celebrate student success and important events that may be of interest to your students.
- Feed a custom RSS feed related to the topic of the course to your students.
- Automatically share blog posts written by your students on WordPress, Blogger, etc. with custom RSS feeds.



## Creating an Announcement

1. In Course Navigation, **click the Announcements** link.
2. **Click the Add Announcement button.**
3. Type a title for the announcement in the topic title field and add content in the Rich Content Editor. You can also add links, files, and images to the announcement using the content selector.
4. To select specific sections to receive your announcement, click the Post to drop-down menu and select sections from the list provided. If your course does not have sections, Canvas will still show the All my sections option, and all course users can view the announcement.
5. You can add an attachment to your announcement by clicking the Choose File button.
6. In the Options section, you can select various options for your announcement. You can delay the posting of your announcement, which allows you to schedule the announcement for a future date.
7. By default, comments are not allowed in announcements unless the Allow users to comment checkbox is selected.
8. **Click the Save button.** Unless you are using the delay posting option in Announcements, once you click Save, your announcement will immediately be posted in your course and a notification will be sent to your students.



## Displaying Announcements on your Home Page

You can show up to the most recent 15 announcements as part of your Course Home Page, the number of these announcements can be set by course. The Course Home Page only displays text and links within announcements; any images or media will not be shown.

1. In Course Navigation, **click the Settings link.**
  2. **Click the Course Details** tab.
  3. **Click the more options** link.
  4. **Select the Show recent announcements on Course home page checkbox.**
  5. In the Number of announcements menu, **select the number of announcements to show on the home page.**
  6. **Click the Update Course Details** button.
-

## PART TWO – Discussions

ICON provides a system for online class discussions, allowing both instructors and students to start and contribute to discussion topics. Discussions can be created as an assignment for grading purposes, or simply serve as a forum for course conversations.

Reasons to incorporate a Discussion Forum in your ICON course site include:

- Help students start thinking about an upcoming Assignment or class discussion.
- Follow-up on a conversation or questions that began in a face-to-face classroom.
- Test student comprehension of important points made in class.
- Debate contradictory ideas.
- Brainstorm different approaches to a class problem.



### The Discussions Index Page

1. **Click Discussions** in the left-hand Course Navigation panel.

The Course Navigation menu can be customized. If “Discussions” is an active link, students can access this menu option. If it is faded, students will have to access discussions through another method, either Modules or Assignments. For this training, be sure that Discussions is enabled for students to access.

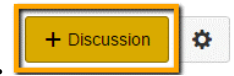
The Discussion Index page allows you to view all the discussions within a course. *The Discussions Index Page is organized into three main areas: Pinned Discussions, Discussions, and Closed for Comments Discussions.*

Pinned discussions are discussions that you want your students to see at the top of their page. Pinned discussions can be arranged in any order. Students will only see this section heading if there are discussions within this section. You can pin a discussion using the Settings icon, or you can pin a discussion by dragging it to the Pinned Discussions area. Within Pinned Discussions, you can manually reorder discussions. Drag and drop the discussions in the order you prefer.

Closed Discussions are set to a view only mode, either manually or through availability date settings. These are discussions that are only available in a read-only state. Closed for comments discussions are also ordered by most recent activity. Students will always see this section heading, even if there are no discussions within this section.



## Creating a Discussion Forum

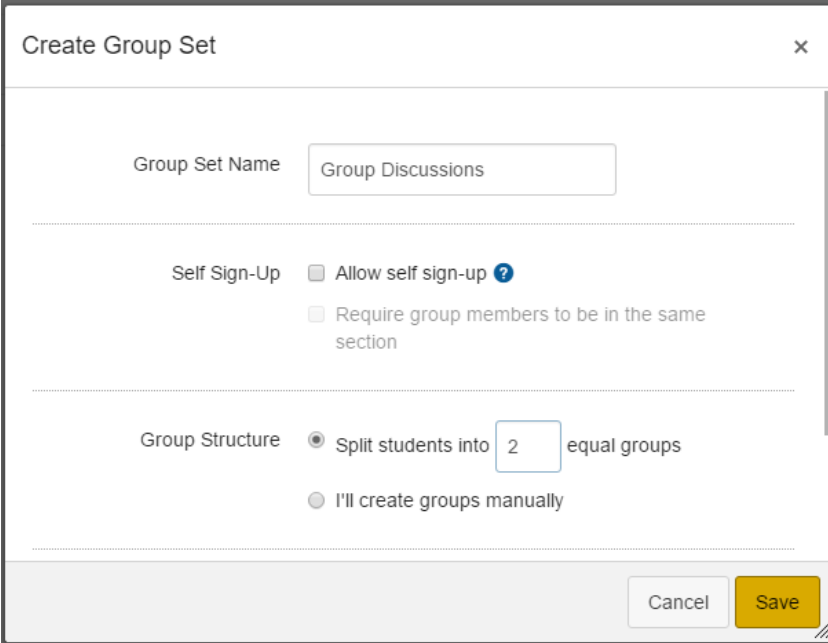


1. On the Discussions Index Page, **click the “Add a Discussion” button.**
2. **Enter “Introduce Yourself” in the “Topic Title” field.**
3. **Enter a description in the Rich Text Editor field.** You can also add links to files, images, or other content in this space.

4. Select from the options for this discussion forum:

- a. **Focused or Threaded:** there are two types of Discussion Forums in ICON.
  - i. **Use a Focused Discussion for single posts and related comments.** One discussion leader typically posts a message and multiple learners comment on it. This makes the discussion forum more mobile friendly than the Threaded Discussion Forums.
  - ii. **Use a Threaded Discussion for multiple posts and related comments.** One or more discussion leaders post a message and multiple learners comment on it with the freedom to create any number of related discussion topics and comments (infinite layers of nesting). This makes the discussion forum less mobile friendly than the Threaded Discussion Forums.
- b. **Graded Discussions:** discussion forums can be used as an assessment tool by selecting to make the discussion “**Graded.**” When a discussion forum is selected to be used in grading, it will automatically be added to the Gradebook and Assignment list for the course.

- i. **Select the option “Graded”** for this discussion forum. Setting a discussion forum as Graded opens additional options for the discussion settings.
- ii. **Set Grading Details** for this discussion forum.
  1. Points Possible - For this exercise, **set 10 Points Possible**.
  2. **NOTE:** Graded items can have a value of zero points.
- c. **Group Discussions:** groups within ICON courses can participate in discussion forums in a space that is separated from the entire course. These group discussions can be graded or ungraded activities in the class.
  - . If no groups have been set up in the People tab, you will be prompted to create a Group Set as soon as you check “This is a Group Discussion.”



- ii. Instructors will have links to each group’s discussion forum, however students are unable to view or participate in discussions of other students’ groups.



5. Set Availability From and Until dates, if desired.
6. **Click Save or Save and Publish.**

**NOTE:** Your new forum will not appear to students on the main Discussions page until you have published the forum.



## Adding a Discussion Message / Posting to a Discussion Forum

You can post a message to help get your students started or to respond to something students are discussing. For this exercise we will use the ICON Test Student function to leave a message for grading.

1. In Course Navigation, **click the Settings** link.
2. **Click Student View** (top right).
3. **Click Discussions.**
4. Click into the graded discussion forum.
5. Click the Reply field.
6. Type your message in the HTML Editor window.
7. Click **Post Reply**. Your message will appear in the forum with the Test Student name and the date stamp visible.
8. Click **Leave Student View** (bottom right).

DEMO

## Grading a Discussion Message

1. In Course Navigation, **click the Grades** link.
2. Hover over the name of the discussion forum and click the arrow that appears in the bottom right corner of the column heading cell.
3. Click the SpeedGrader link.

Student Name	Secondary ID	Why have online discussions? Out of 10	Assignments	Total
Test Student	9754e91502e9d095c			-

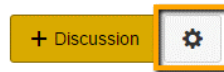
4. SpeedGrader opens the assignment for the first student listed in the student list, arranged alphabetically by last name. For Discussion forums, SpeedGrader pulls all a student's comments into one view, or you can see the whole discussion.
5. **Enter a score** into the Grade field.
6. **Enter feedback** in the Comment field. Note that you may also attach a file, a media comment, or use the speech recognition tools to provide your student feedback to these assignments.

7. **Click the Submit** Button.
8. Note that the icon in front of Test Student has changed from an orange dot (ungraded) to a green checkmark.
9. **Click the Gradebook** link (upper left) to see updated grades.



## Discussion Options

1. In the Discussion Index Page, **click Settings**.
2. These are the course settings that affect the behavior of Discussion Forums in your course:



Edit Discussions Settings

**My Settings**

Manually mark posts as read

**Student Settings**

Create discussion topics

Edit and delete their own posts

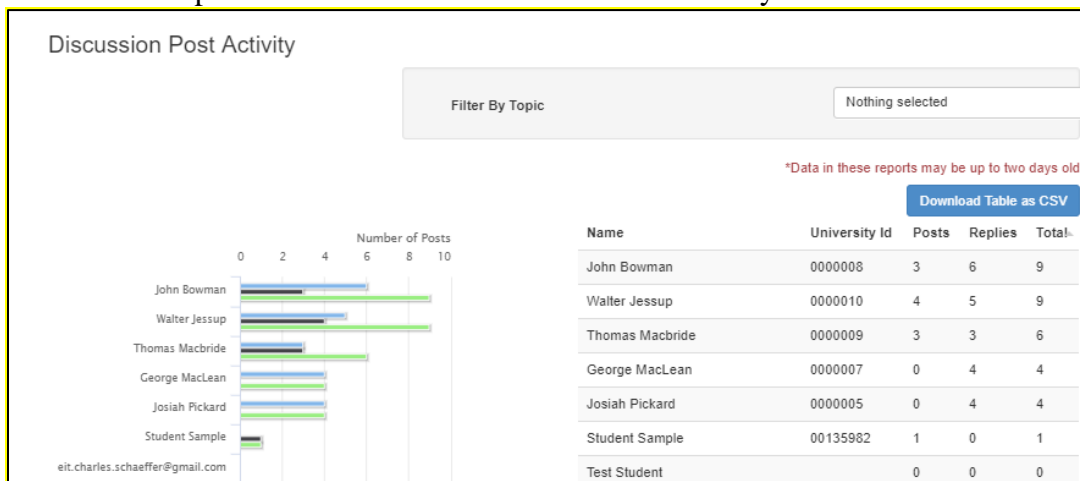
Attach files to discussions

Cancel Save Settings

3. Allow students to attach files to discussion posts by clicking the **Let students attach files to Discussion** checkbox.
4. Allow students to create new discussion topics by clicking the **Let students create Discussion Topics** checkbox.
5. Allow students to edit or delete their own discussion posts by clicking the **Let students edit or delete their own discussion posts** checkbox.
6. **Click “Save Settings.”**

## FAQ

- How can I limit the time the topics in the forum are available?
  - To create the forum now but hide it from participants until a later time, use the Available from options.
- How can I allow students to view topics but not post new messages (i.e. read only)?
  - You can move the forum to the Closed for Comments area of the Discussion Index page.
  - You can also specify a time the forum automatically closes by using the Available until date.
  - NOTE: Setting a due date does not close a discussion.
- How can I restrict students' access to a discussion forum until they have contributed a response?
  - To create this restriction, use the Users must post before seeing replies option.
- How can I restrict participation in the discussion topic to members of a group or to students who have completed a specified online task?
  - Deliver your discussion forums through the Modules tool. See the Online Help Section: How do I add requirements to a Module? (<https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-2862>)
- Where can I find further information about ICON Discussion Forums?
  - [https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-4131#jive\\_content\\_id\\_Discussions](https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-4131#jive_content_id_Discussions)
- What statistics can I find for participation in discussion forums?
  - Summative statistics on the totals of Discussion Forum activities can be found in ICON Course Statistics.
  - Individual statistics on student participation in discussion forums can be found in a user's Access Report. This is found from the People page. (<https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-2864>)
  - ICON Data Reports can be used to visualize student activity within an ICON course site.





## PART THREE – Gradebook Messages



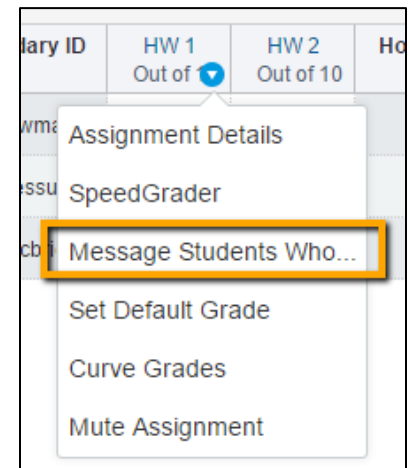
### Message Students Who

You can send messages to your students from within the Gradebook. Although one message will be sent to multiple students at the same time, each student will receive an individual copy of the message.

1. Go to **Grades**.
2. Hover over **an assignment** with your mouse. Click the **down-arrow** that appears.
3. Select **Message Students Who**.
4. Select **Scored less than**.
5. Type a number in the box.

\*\*Notice that your list of students may change if you make changes to the **Scored less than** number.

6. Change the subject field.
7. Enter a message for these students. The Send Message button will not activate until text has been entered in this field.
8. Click **Send Message**.

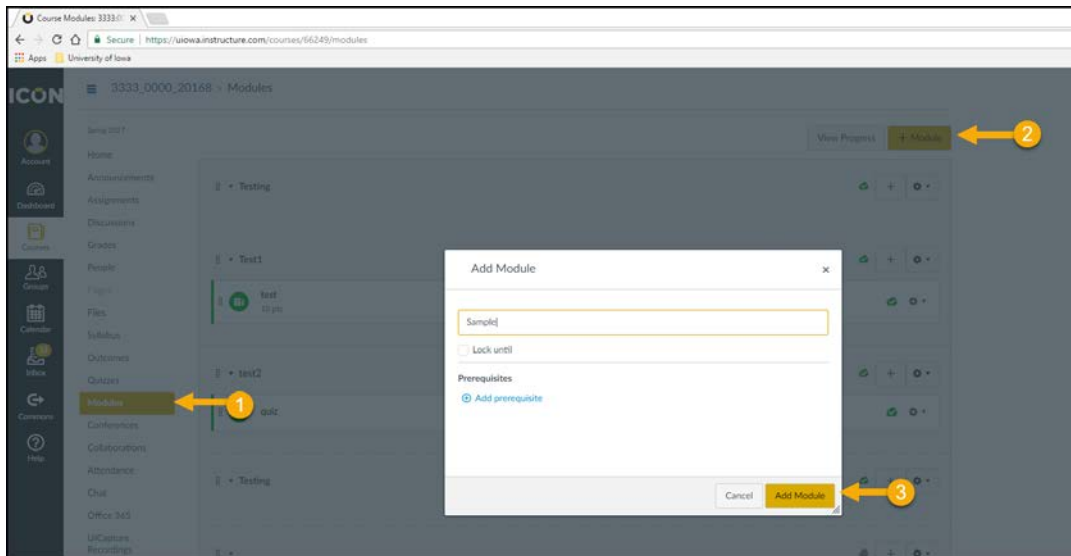


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## PART FOUR – Creating a Zoom Meeting in ICON

The Zoom integration in ICON allows students to access a Zoom meeting room without an instructor needing to send out invitations.

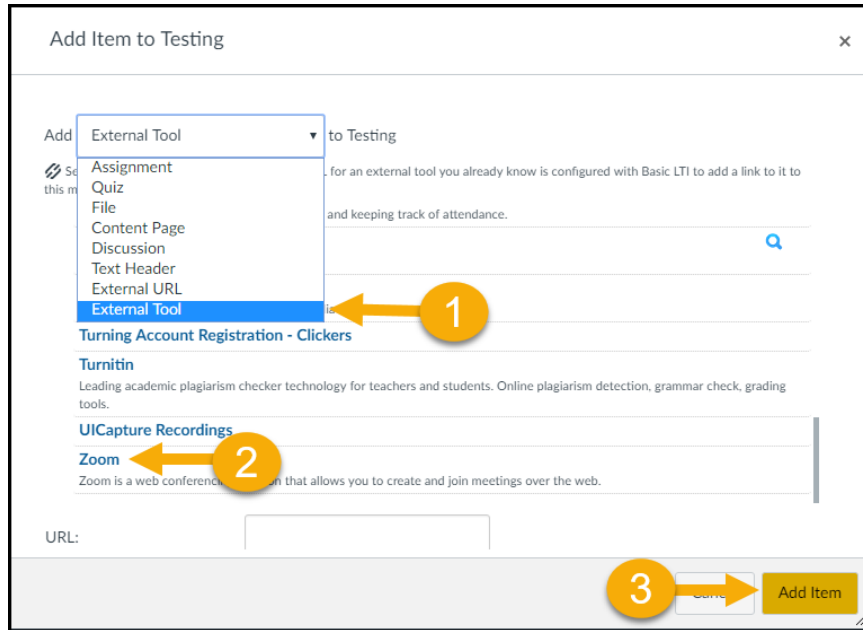
1. Click on **Modules** in the left navigational menu.
2. Click **+Modules** in the top right corner of the page to add a new module.  
**Note** that you don't need a new module. An existing module will work too.
3. Name the module and then **click Add Module**.



4. To the right of your new modules name, click on the grey un-published icon to publish this to students. Then click the + button directly to the right of the green published icon.



5. Click on the drop-down menu at the top of the prompt and select **External tool**.
6. Scroll down until you come across Zoom, it should be one of the last entries.
7. Click on **Zoom**.
8. Click **Add Item**.



9. This will create a link to a Zoom Meeting.

10. Make sure to **publish** this link by clicking on the grey un-published icon.



Individuals with disabilities are encouraged to attend all University of Iowa-sponsored events. If you are a person with a disability who requires a reasonable accommodation in order to participate in this program, please contact (The Office of Teaching, Learning & Technology) in advance at (319-384-4357).

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