Starting a conversation in an online discussion: How do I write to get a reply from others?

Other

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Chua, Shi-Min (2020). Starting a conversation in an online discussion: How do I write to get a reply from others? The Open University.

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Version: Poster
Starting a Conversation in Online Discussion

How do I write to get a reply from others?

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Problems?

- Online users join online discussions to socialize or exchange opinions with others
- Very few posts receive replies in various online spaces

Posts that receive replies 21%

Posts that do not receive reply 79%

Why?

- Discourse is how people use language to communicate
- The discourse in the posts may or may not invite others to reply?

Let’s test this hypothesis! I am going to compare these two types of posts by examining the words used in them.

Fig. Percentage of posts that receive replies in the online discussion of 12 free online courses offered by FutureLearn (www.futurelearn.com), which I investigate.

Words used more often in the posts that receive replies

"For example, we have experienced first-hand"
"This is a very useful article"

By explicitly mentioning what you are going to talk about, you set up a common ground for others to comment on.

The common ground is like a concrete object that others can also talk about

"Anybody has similar problem?"
"Anyone interested in..."

By calling out others, you start a conversation with potential audience.

Hooray! Now I know how to write a post to increase my chance of getting a reply!

• Language matters even in online world. Mind your language!
• You can create a relationship with others in an online discussion with your discourse.
• Language use in online world is one kind of digital literacy, i.e., a person’s ability to utilize digital platforms, that warrants educators’ and researchers’ attention, such that online world can be cultivated positively despite the potential aggression that happens online.

Fig. The bigger the font of a word, the more often it is used in the posts that receive replies compared to those that do not. Words with the same colour share similar discourse.

All emojis are from https://emoji.org/