Best Practices for Using Piazza

Last Update: October 8, 2014

Table of Contents

Introduction

In this nanodegree, we will use Piazza as our primary platform for asking and answer questions, making announcements, collecting feedback, and having discussions. This document will walk you through best practices for posting questions and contributing to discussions. For starters, check out the flowchart below for a big picture view of how to contribute to our community through Piazza.
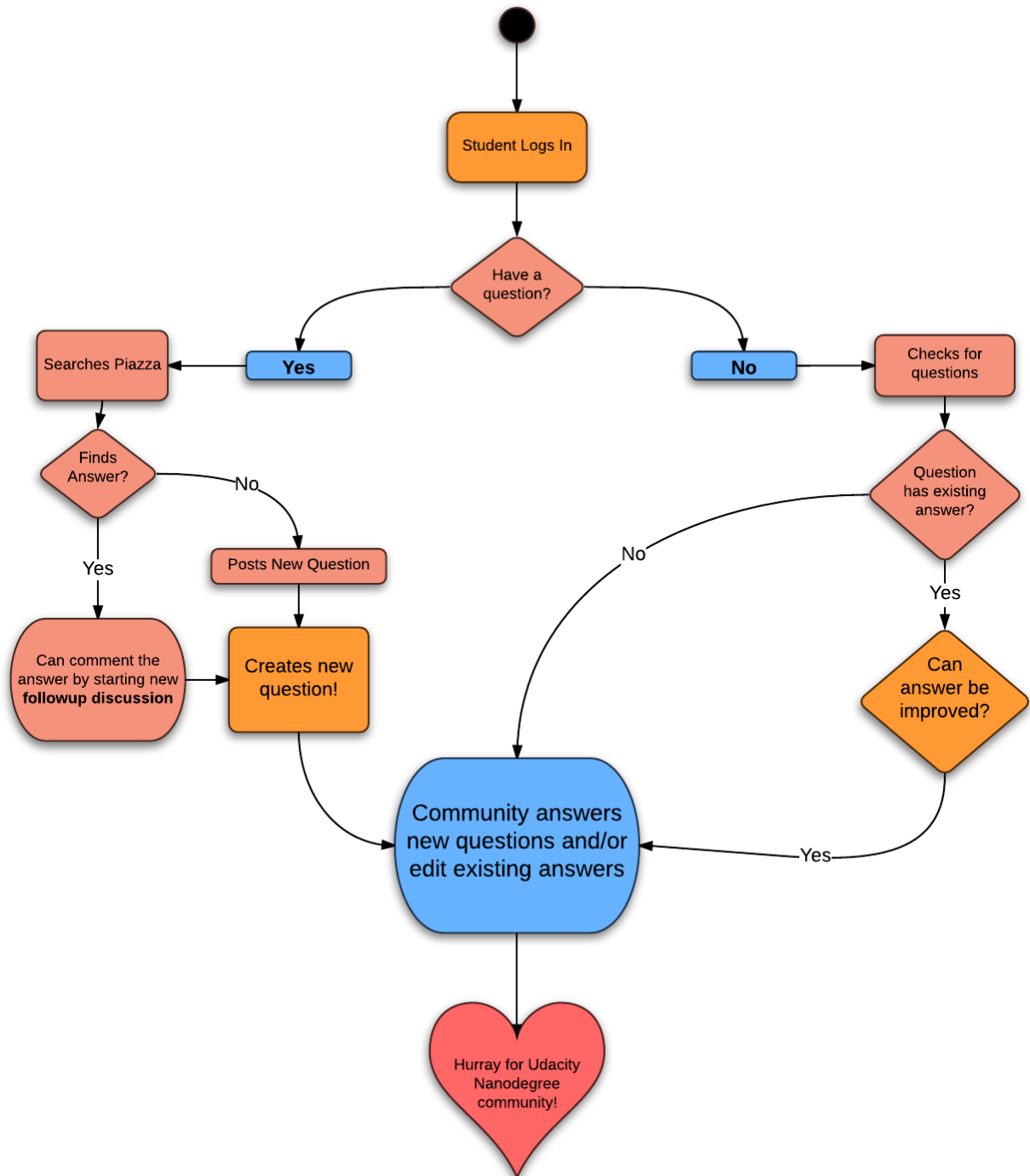
What is Piazza?

Piazza is a Q&A platform designed to facilitate discussions between students and instructors. Unlike many forums that have multiple threads with multiple posts with multiple answers, a Piazza discussion typically contains one question and one set of answers (one from the instructors and one from the students) that the community agrees upon. Students have the ability to edit their answer just like a wiki page. In addition to questions, you can also post notes and polls in Piazza to connect with other students. Here are some tips for how to best use Piazza to deepen your learning and build our community.

Ask questions.

We strongly recommend that students post their questions on Piazza. This allows everyone to benefit from the responses. In addition to instructors, students can also contribute to answering questions. Click on the "New Post" button to post a new question, note, or poll. Be sure to select the folder that you think your post belongs in so we can stay organized.

Edit questions and answers wiki-style.

Piazza is a wiki-style Q&A platform. Each question has two types of answers: one is collectively composed by instructors and the other by students. This format means that all students have the power to add to and modify existing answers. Students can also edit each other's questions

to expand upon what is being asked. Use the students' answer box to create a new answer or edit an existing answer.
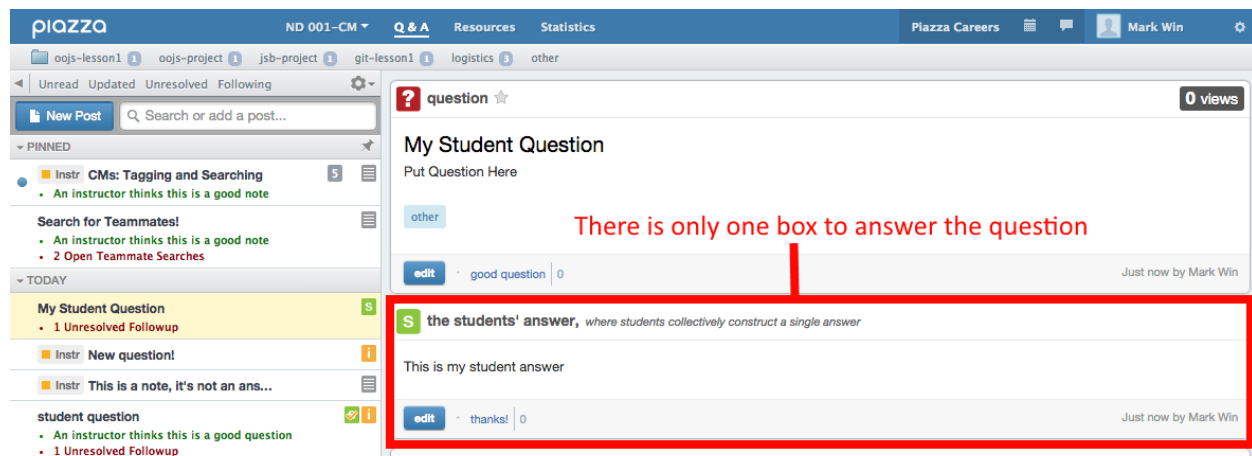
Search existing posts for helpful info.

You can think of Piazza as a knowledge base that you and your fellow cohort members are building together. This knowledge base may already contain the information you want to post about, so be sure to look through existing posts before writing something new. Preventing duplicate posts from arising will keep our forum clean and helpful.

To make sure you can leverage this knowledge base, there are a couple of built-in features to help you find relevant posts. Along the top bar, you'll see a series of folder names (e.g. logistics, other, career_development, jsbasics_lesson1, etc.). Clicking on one of these will show you the posts filed in this folder. To do a more fine-grained search of existing posts, type something into the search bar.
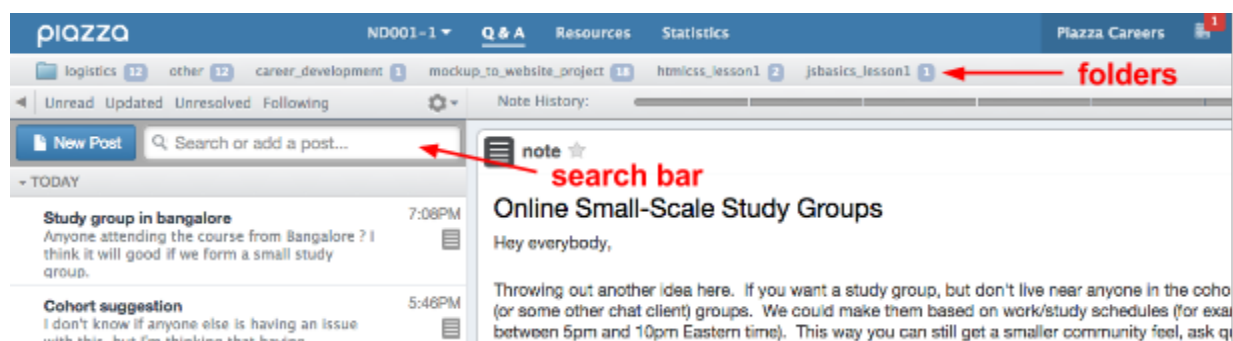

Add a followup to comment or ask further questions.

To comment on or ask further questions about a post, start a **followup discussion**. Please do **not** put your comments and other questions in the student answer box, since doing so disguises the fact that there is unresolved content in the discussion. Mark your followup question as

resolved when the issue has been addressed, and add any relevant information back into the Q&A above.

Select your preferred email settings.

Piazza, by default, will email you a daily digest of all activity that occurs in your classroom. You can change your email settings by accessing your account settings by clicking the gear icon in the upper right hand corner and click on **Account/Email Settings**.
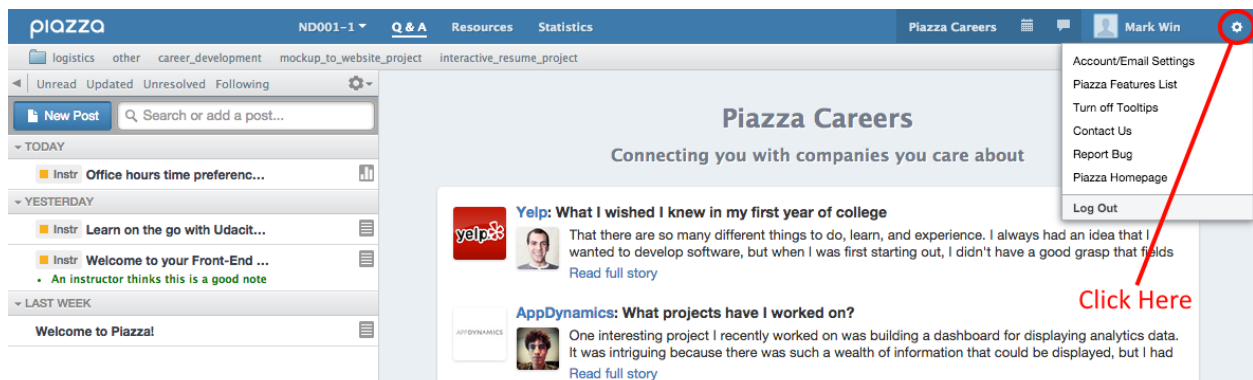
Scroll down to set your email settings for your class and choose the frequency with which you would like to receive updates.

Welcome to the nanodegree! We look forward to working with you.