

## Communicating Effectively Online

Online learning is not a spectator sport. It is everyone's responsibility to participate fully so they can get the most from the experience. Here are some simple tips to follow to enhance your participation and engagement in the learning process:

- Ask questions: If you don't know the answer, someone else will. The discussion board is the area for asking questions related to content OR any challenges you are having. Make sure that you have clearly indicated the subject of your message.
- Reach out to others: Offer a fact, article, link or other item that can help others learn something related to the course content.
- Be appropriate: The online classroom is not the place for insulting or insensitive comments, attacks, or venting. Inappropriate behavior will usually subject to disciplinary action.
- Be diplomatic: When sending messages on emotionally charged topics, write the message and then walk away for at least an hour before re-reading the message and then sending it. Re-reading emotionally charged messages ensures that they are constructive instead of destructive. Think of the person at the other end.
- Stay focused: Stay on topic to increase the efficiency of your learning.

### Discussion Board Posts [DBP]

Most online classes have a discussion board component to them. It is expected for you to discuss, demonstrate, and connect your understanding of the assigned readings and media. Questions will be provided to focus your attention on the important elements of the discussion thread. Discussion board postings are NOT a summary of course materials, debates, or your opinion. They are critical analysis and academic discussions among students. Your professor will participate with replies to some, but not all, of your postings because it is their job to facilitate the conversation as for the whole class, not just individuals.

## Effective Electronic Communication

Some professors require a word limit on discussion posts. When possible, though, keep your messages concise and clearly written. Most ideas can be stated in a couple of paragraphs, although sometimes a longer message may be needed to develop your thoughts adequately. Keep in mind that people are more apt to read and digest shorter messages than long ones.

1. Be respectful of other's ideas, opinions, and beliefs. It's ne to disagree with someone, but please respect their right to think differently.
2. Avoid posting simple two or three word statements such as "I agree" or "Good point." If you think someone has made an especially strong point and you want to say so, and then explain why by adding a few sentences describing your response or adding to the original point.
3. When posting on a discussion board, avoid the use of caps in your electronic messages, as wording in caps comes across as shouting. More information on NETIQUETTE, the etiquette of Internet communication, can be found at <http://www.albion.com/netiquette>.

## E-Mail Guidelines

When communicating electronically, many of the feelings or impressions that are transmitted via body language in face-to-face communications, are lost. Consequently, interpreting emotions and innuendos is much more dicult. Only what is written, or drawn, carries the message. Often, excitement can be misinterpreted as anger or insult. It is important that we all keep this in mind as we communicate. Words in print may seem harmless, but they could emotionally injure us when working at a distance. Hence, it is vitally important that there are some ground rules for working at a distance.

## Subject Headings:

- Should relate to the content of the email
  - Should clearly let the receiver know what the email is about
- Ex: "Upcoming Project Deadline" or "Analysis Question"



## Salutations

- All emails should have a clear, professional salutation  
Ex: "Dear Dr. Johnson" or "Dear Professor Marrufo"

## Signing E-Mails

- All emails should be signed with your name  
Ex. Thank You,  
Consuelo Salas

## Attachments

If any files are attached:

- Explain the reason for sending them
- Indicate the program in which they were written