

Do's and Don'ts of Online Student Communication

Adapted from Catlin Tucker- www.CollaborizeClassroom.com

To be effective, an online classroom must be a safe space where students feel their voices will be respected, supported and heard. The following strategies will help create and maintain a safe space for online learning.

- 1) **Use each other's names.** Using a person's name when you respond to his/her postings creates a friendly online tone.
- 2) **Read questions** and conversational postings carefully to avoid unnecessary confusion.
- 3) **Compliment** your peers when they post strong responses or contribute original ideas.
- 4) **Ask questions.** If anything is unclear or you want further information or insight on a topic, just ask. If you have a question, there are probably other members of the group who are confused and need further clarification as well.
- 5) **Be considerate.** Remember that your peers cannot see your body language or hear your tone of voice, so you need to keep your language direct and respectful.
- 6) **Avoid** slang, jargon, and sarcasm.
- 7) **Listen** to all ideas presented. Remember there is no right or wrong in a discussion. A variety of perspectives add depth.
- 8) **Stay** open minded.
- 9) **Respond** instead of reacting. Do not write a response if you are angry or upset. Instead, wait until you have had time to calm down and collect your thoughts.
- 10) **Really read** your peers responses. Avoid skimming. Respect the time your peers have spent articulating their thoughts by reading carefully and thoughtfully.
- 11) **Reread your messages** before sending them to ensure that your ideas are clearly communicated and supported.
- 12) **Critique** the content, not the person.
- 13) **Do not present** your **personal opinions** as fact. Back up your ideas with information to strengthen your statements.
- 14) **Courteously** answer all questions addressed directly to you.
- 15) **Make I** statements **when respectfully disagreeing**. Sharing an opposing opinion or idea is an important part of discussion, but it needs to be presented in constructive manner that encourages further discussion.
- 16) **Do not use all caps** when writing. It is interpreted as yelling.
- 17) **Avoid emotional punctuation**, like exclamation points, unless you are complimenting an idea shared.