

Resource 5.1 Dos and Don'ts of Student Communication Online

Name _____ Date _____

Dos and Don'ts of Student Communication Online

Strategies for creating and maintaining a safe space:

- **Use each other's names.** Using a person's name when you respond to his or her postings creates a friendly tone online.
- **Read questions and conversational postings carefully** to avoid unnecessary confusion.
- **Compliment your peers** when they post strong responses or contribute original ideas.
- **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. Remember, there is no such thing as a dumb question.
- **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.
- **Avoid slang and jargon.** Some slang or jargon may be familiar to you, but not to others.
- **No sarcasm.** Sarcasm is negative and can lead to tensions and hurt feelings online. Keep language clear and concise.
- **Listen to all ideas presented.** Remember, there are no right or wrong answers in a discussion, and a variety of perspectives adds depth.
- **Stay open-minded.** If you expect others to respect and consider your comments and ideas, you must do the same for them.
- **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 before responding.
- **Really read your peers' responses.** Avoid skimming. Respect the time your peers have spent articulating their thoughts by reading carefully and thoughtfully.
- **Reread your messages before sending** them to ensure that your ideas are clearly communicated and supported.
- **Critique the content,** not the person. Focus on what has been said, not the person who said it.
- **Do not present your personal opinions as fact.** Back up your ideas with information (i.e., details, evidence, and examples) to strengthen your statements.
- **Courteously answer all questions** addressed directly to you.
- **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 a constructive manner that encourages further discussion.
- **Do not use all caps** when writing; it is interpreted as yelling.
- **Avoid emotional punctuation,** like exclamation points, unless you are complimenting an idea shared.

Source: Democrasoft, <http://www.democrasoft.com>

Retrieved from the companion website for *Blended Learning in Grades 4–12: Leveraging the Power of Technology to Create Student-Centered Classrooms* by Catlin R. Tucker. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.