

# Netiquette

## Rules for Online Communication within the Digital Classroom

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### **Rationale**

Netiquette is an issue that is best decided by the instructor and is inherently dependent upon the situation. In the classroom, each situation or activity is different and calls for differing levels of formality. This holds true in the online classroom as well.

The level of formality is also dependent upon the dictates of time. An activity that takes place on a message board or forum communication is not dependent upon time. In this asynchronous environment, students have time to carefully consider their words and write with an eye for correct grammar and spelling. This is, perhaps, the most formal of environments.

In a synchronous environment like a live chat, time is more of an issue just as in a classroom discussion. With time being a factor, spelling and grammar errors are to be expected and possibly overlooked. Just as in oral communication, students do not speak in complete sentences nor with proper and correct grammatical structure. This should be expected. Also with time being a factor in a synchronous discussion, emoticons could be a useful way to convey emotion and or tone just as body language does in a face to face discussion. As such, they might be expected and, unless excessive, overlooked.

Email communication is a bit of a hybrid. Some forms of email can be asynchronous in nature and therefore allow for a greater formality, but other factors can influence the formality like repeated communication and familiarity as well as urgency in the need to reply. Email communication is a bit of a hybrid of the two environments, sometimes falling into either category.

### **Rules**

The specific rules of netiquette should be the domain of the instructor. If an activity calls for more formality, then the instructor should communicate these requirements before the activity begins. Likewise, if it can be successful in a less formal environment, then that should also be communicated by the instructor.

Regardless of the situation or instructor, the following five rules should be followed in all online communications.

1. Be respectful of others.
2. Keep It related to class.
3. Keep it appropriate for school (i.e. no cursing).
4. Think about what you are saying before posting.
5. Be honest in what you post.

Anything beyond these five rules is at the discretion of the instructor.