

Virtual Learning “Netiquette” & Norms

It is important to understand that the online world, though used often by students, is rarely used in a professional way. For that reason, teachers and parents must work hard to educate their students on how to communicate and learn within the online environment. The guide below highlights topics that students should be aware of before working and learning online.

Security

Always remember that your password is the only thing that is stopping other people from accessing your account. Weak passwords allow for others to access and therefore allow for pranks or even more serious harm.

- ❖ Don't share your passwords with anyone.
- ❖ Always log out of your account after using a shared computer. By logging out and closing all windows it greatly reduces the chances of anyone else accessing your account.

General Guides to Communication

#1- This is not Twitter, this is not a text message. Proper writing is always expected.

- ❖ As with everything in life, treat everyone with respect.
- ❖ Always speak to your teacher/professor by their proper name and title- Mr/Mrs/Dr
- ❖ Use clear language and explain or describe thoroughly. Especially if asking for help with a lesson or have a technology question.
- ❖ Avoid slang. Using “u” instead of “you” is never appropriate
- ❖ If you use all caps it is translated AS YELLING! Never write an entire email or message in all caps. It will be seen as rude.
- ❖ If professionally writing responses to questions then emoticons should not be used.
- ❖ Be careful with sarcasm. Some may get you are being sarcastic, some may not and this could offend.
- ❖ Never share your personal/confidential information (full name, phone, address, etc) within a class discussion or via online messaging/ email.

Emails

- ❖ Emails from your teacher may go to your junk/spam folder. When starting an online course become accustomed to checking that folder and looking for messages from your teacher. These emails can then be marked ‘safe’ and they will go into your inbox in the future.
- ❖ Always put a subject line when emailing.
- ❖ Keep emails brief, however, if asking for help you should clarify the assignment name and be specific as to what you are having trouble with (uploading submission, accessing the assignment, etc)
- ❖ When attaching files, such as a Google File, always double-check that file settings allow for the teacher to view it.

Virtual Learning “Netiquette” & Norms

- ❖ Always sign your name. It is more professional and respectful. Also, some teachers may not know who you are by your email address, especially if that email address is something like ilovevols@gmail.com
- ❖ If responding to emails, be careful when hitting “Reply All”. Oftentimes, just replying to the person who sent the message is enough.
- ❖ Always proofread before hitting send.

Online Discussions

- ❖ The most important thing to remember with online discussions is once you hit reply/send, the entire class can see your response. Proofread, make sure you are explaining your thoughts thoroughly, and always write in complete, proper sentences.
- ❖ If referencing something you learned outside of class material, always cite those sources.
- ❖ When replying to classmates, avoid generic replies like, “I agree”. Include why you agree or disagree, give examples to back your response.
- ❖ Always be respectful of other’s opinions. You may not agree with their point of view but you should always respond respectfully and again, explain your thoughts thoroughly.
- ❖ Never make insulting or demeaning remarks.
- ❖ Before posting a question to a discussion board, look through the questions that are there and make sure it has not already been asked and answered. Also, before replying to a classmate’s question, make sure you are confident that you know the answer. Never make a guess.
- ❖ Keep an open mind and always ask yourself, would I say this if I was face-to-face with this person?
- ❖ Always proofread before hitting submit.

Online Live Video Conferencing (Zoom, Skype, Canvas)

- ❖ If you are not talking, be on mute.
- ❖ Before clicking to activate your camera double check your surroundings, your own dress, people around you, pets. If anything could be a distraction, change your location, or do not turn on your camera.
- ❖ Use the chat box sparingly. Sometimes teachers may disable the chat box to avoid distractions.
- ❖ When you are called on, unmute, and then speak clearly with your device close so the microphone can pick up your voice. If you have a loud barking dog, make sure it is out of the room.
- ❖ Log in 5-10 minutes before the conference begins to make sure you are able to access. Most likely you will be put in a waiting room. This way if you are not able to access, you will have time to troubleshoot.

Virtual Learning “Netiquette” & Norms

- ❖ Before your first video conferencing make sure you understand the program. If you want to ask a question through chat, do you know how? If you want to “raise your hand” to speak, do you know how? Again, logging in early, or even logging in the day before (if possible), will give you time to learn and become familiar with the program.

Academic Integrity/Plagiarism

Trust is everything in the online environment, therefore, plagiarism can be a deal-breaker. Whether the cheating was purposeful or not.

- ❖ Plagiarism = Cheating and will not be accepted.
- ❖ It is the student’s responsibility to understand what plagiarism is and to also safeguard their own work from students who may want to take it and submit as their own.
- ❖ Your highly experienced teachers use many means to spot plagiarized work. Their expertise in the subject is their greatest tool in identifying work that does not reflect the student’s knowledge level or the teachings of the course.
- ❖ Plagiarism may be accidental or blatant; however, students are held to the same standards and consequences.
- ❖ Some examples of plagiarism/cheating:
 - Turning in any written work that was directly taken from the internet without citing and using quotations (quotations should only be used sparingly within research papers to defend your own work and should NEVER be used within an assessment/test)
 - Turning in written work that was only slightly reworded from an internet or book source.
 - Submitting another student’s work (full or partial) as your own
 - Using information from a book, textbook, or encyclopedia without citing the source
 - Using online translators for assignments or assessments
 - Using websites such as Course Hero or Brainly to obtain answers on assignments or assessments
 - Self Plagiarism- submitting the same work for multiple classes without teacher approval

Adapted from: <http://teach.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/NetiquetteGuideforOnlineCourses.pdf>

The Center for Teaching Excellence, University of Florida