Chip’s Online Teaching Blog – *Discussion Tips & Netiquette for Online Teachers*

**Find your voice / Be present in the discussion**
- Be intentional – understand the purpose / goals / intended outcomes of the discussion
- Ask the right question(s)
- Avoid THE answer
- Know how much is enough? / How much is too much?
- Find the teachable moments
- Allow your students to speak first…to speak up…to find their voices

**Understanding your roles – You’re the guide on the side, not the sage on the stage**

- **Moderator**
  - Encourage your students to participate
  - Ensure that a few of the students don’t dominate the conversation
  - Keep the discussion focused
  - Summarize the highlights

- **Facilitator**
  - Set specific expectations (about #logins/postings, quality & quantity, assessment, grading rubric)
  - Establish the timeline (begins…first post by…responses by…ends – provide closure and move on)
  - Provide information to help students complete the assignments
    - Establish the rules of engagement
    - Suggest strategies to help students engage and learn with and from each other
    - Help students reflect on their responses and what others have posted

- **Guide**
  - Keep students informed – announcements, email, postings, updates, reminders, nudges
  - Model netiquette and online discussion do’s and don’t
  - Encourage (through tutorials, modeling, communicating)
    - Participation and sharing
    - Others to responds (end with a question)
  - Analysis
  - Synthesis
  - Relevance / Application
  - Reflection
  - Bring out multiple perspectives
  - Weave together threads from individual students
• Make connections to course materials
• Build community

• Manager
  • Students learning anytime, anywhere is not the same as you teaching 24/7
  • Time management practices & tips – your and theirs
  • Traffic (Flow and volume)
  • Group size
  • Communication – within discussion / off line
  • Observe – Flame ups / Humor / Wrong information / Poor practices
• Variety of purposes

Use good netiquette! To encourage active participation by everyone, and to keep our online discussions lively and interactive, please use good “netiquette,” including:

• Check the discussion frequently, respond appropriately, and stay on subject.
• Provide a little background on yourself the first time you enter the discussion.
• Personalize your question or response. Address your message to the person by using his or her name.
• Be specific – identify what issue, topic, or specific statement you are asking about/responding to.
• Focus on one subject per message. It is hard to answer a question like, “I was wondering what you thought about infants in child care, the latest brain development research, and what to do about toddlers who bite.” Better to ask a specific question about one of these broad topics to start a “conversation.”
• Refer to the topic/message you are replying to by including the topic in your message.
• Invite a response to your comment by asking another open-ended question.
• No SHOUTING! - Capitalize words only to highlight a point or for titles.
• Be professional and use care when interacting online – you don’t have the ability to gauge a person’s reaction or feelings as you do in a face-to-face conversation.
• Use humor carefully – it is equally hard to gauge a reaction to your funny comment or aside – and the recipient may misinterpret your attempt to be funny as criticism.
• Identify your sources if you use quotes, references, or resources.
• Keep messages brief – no more than two or three paragraphs at a time. (Any longer becomes difficult to read, so plan your responses before you write them. And shorter messages encourage more people to join in to the discussion.)
• If you do post a long message, warn other readers at the beginning that it is lengthy.
• Never forward someone’s message to someone else without getting their permission first.
• Join in and have fun!

See you online,

Chip