"Netiquette" in Online Courses

You are probably already aware of the ground rules in a traditional, face-to-face classroom environment, but there is an additional code of conduct students should be aware of when interacting with others in an online environment. This code of conduct for online courses is called "netiquette" and is the practical code of behavior for working virtually on the Internet. The following are some general netiquette guidelines to keep in mind in addition to the normal rules of behavior for a classroom setting.

1. Adhere to the same standards of behavior online that you follow in real life and in a real classroom.

2. Know where you are in cyberspace, and understand that many people will view what you type.

3. Respect other people's time and bandwidth - so contribute valuable comments rather than "noise."

4. Express yourself clearly online and respect the views of others.

5. Share expert knowledge rather than "keeping it to yourself." And share this knowledge with respect rather than using it to put others down.

6. Don't start "flame wars" (emotionally-charged opinions) and work to douse flaming whenever you see it.

7. Respect other people's privacy by not sharing or spreading inappropriate information. If someone posts information that you think may have been posted accidentally, let them know about it privately.

8. Don't worry too much about typing errors and spelling, as long as you can be understood. But be sure to spend time reviewing your messages before posting to be sure that they are written clearly.

9. Be forgiving of other people's mistakes, and cheerfully acknowledge your own mistakes if you make them. Don't correct insignificant problems in front of the entire class.

10. Use proper and respectful language and refrain from any off-colour jokes, insults, or threats.

11. Challenge ideas rather than the students who offer the ideas. When you challenge an idea, do so respectfully and with the goal of increasing everyone's knowledge.

12. Remember that your colleagues can't see you wink or smile when you type. You may want to use "emoticons" (emotion icons) to indicate your feelings, such as the ubiquitous smiley face :) or frowning face :(Only use those emoticons that will be understood by others, or explain its meaning when you first use it.

For more information about netiquette, refer to the following:

- The Core Rules of Netiquette - http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html

- Top 26 Most Important Rules of Email Etiquette - http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html