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Etiquette for Online Discussions

Online discussions are fraught with opportunities for potential misunderstandings. To avoid these, refer to the following guidelines to guide what you write.

Be friendly, positive and self-reflective: Think before you write. Edit your post if necessary, to ensure that what you have written accurately conveys your thoughts. If you are critiquing a post, say it in a positive tone. Reread before you hit "submit". Remember to treat facilitators and students with respect.

Use proper language: Choose words so that you avoid the use of slang or profanity or excessive exclamation points.

Humour and sarcasm: It is best to avoid humour or sarcasm, as you are not able to supplement your comments with facial expressions or voice cues. Comments can be easily misunderstood in an online environment.

Clear communication: Choose words so that you are communicating clearly. Be sure to ask for clarification if the meaning of a post does not seem clear. It is helpful to write, "I did not understand...". Here you place the misunderstanding on yourself. Remember that a point may not be written as intended. Grammar and spelling are important in professional posts. Errors do occur but take the time to correct as much as possible.

Netspeak: Avoid the use of capitals or bolding, as this is often regarded as shouting (Hanna, 2020).