

Virtual Interaction Practices (VIPs)

Quality. Quality is ensuring that you are communicating valid, reliable and accurate information. Always keep in mind that the purpose of online communication in this course is for learning. Whenever you are communicating in the class, make sure that your communication is fact based and can be backed up with research. Don't spread misinformation. Remember that just because you find it on Google, doesn't mean it is true. Make sure your sources are reliable and accurate. Occasionally you will be asked for your opinion. In those cases, provide research and facts that back up your opinion. When quoting or using someone else's ideas as examples you must give credit to the source by using proper citations.

Safe Spaces. Safe spaces are places where you are able to make mistakes and not be publicly admonished. We all know that learning is uncomfortable. We all make mistakes and that is a good thing, because that is where the learning takes place. All of us should make an effort to ensure that this is a safe space to make mistakes in.

Professionalism. Professionalism is ensuring that your communications are properly written and can be easily read and interpreted. Poorly written communication can lead to misunderstandings in online communication. If you are unsure of someone's intent, ask for clarification. When communicating online for this course, communication should always be well written and use proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Communication should be free from all technical errors. You should also always consider your audience when writing and responding in this course. Remember that English may not be someone's first language, so do not criticize the quality of another classmate's writing.

Email, messages, discussion posts, and assignments should always stay on topic.

Always use polite etiquette in online conversations. When sending email, the subject line should always include the course number and course name. Remember to use proper email etiquette such as titles and closings when appropriate.

Privacy. Privacy is the right to have your communication protected and not be distributed publicly. Technology can be invasive in all our lives. We can find ourselves having a device in our hand most of the time. Almost every website we visit wants a piece of information about us. Many of us use our devices for school, work and personally. It can be easy to blur the lines between those. As a member of this class, you must always respect the privacy of your classmates, your professor, and yourself. Online communication in this course through email, discussions, assignments, feedback, messages, and comments should remain private and not be shared outside of the course.

Respect. Respect is being mindful and considerate of your interaction with others. Respect of all people in the class is of the highest importance and listening to others is part of the communication process. When communicating in this course, always use respect and kindness. You never know what experiences others have had and we all come from different backgrounds. Students are encouraged to share personal experiences, but it's important to maintain a calm and objective tone without letting emotions overshadow the conversation. In an online class, emotions should always be removed from communications.

On occasion, you will be faced with viewpoints different from your own. Disagreements should always be respectful. First, keep an open mind. Second, if you can't say anything nice,

scroll on and don't say anything. Third, sometimes it is appropriate to respond. When disagreeing in a response, do not respond immediately. Responses should be well thought out, backed up by facts and resources, and should never include emotion. Remember that the tone of online communication is interpreted by the reader. If you read something you take offense to from someone else, first ask for clarification before jumping to conclusions. If it is a post disagreeing with your viewpoint, first ask yourself if you communicated clearly and stated fact that can be backed up. Remember to stay away from stereotyping groups of people or making assumptions about others. We should all lift each other up in this course.

Tolerance. Tolerance is the ability to accept and respect differences, beliefs, or practices that may differ from one's own, without necessarily agreeing with or condoning them. Communities in online courses are made up of people from varying backgrounds, ethnicities, genders, experiences, and beliefs. It is crucial for all class members to demonstrate tolerance in their online communications. All communication in this course should demonstrate patience, understanding and open mindedness. Cyberbullying and harassment of any kind will not be tolerated. Cyberbullying is the use of digital communication tools to harass, intimidate, or harm others.

Community Building. Community building is the process of making connections and establishing trust and mutual support among those within a group. Part of the goal of online communication is to build communities. Learning happens much better when we work toward building communities around that goal. Community building helps spread ideas, knowledge, and learning. Community building also brings awareness of society, culture, and issues. Contribute to building a learning community whenever possible. When you build communities in person it is easy because you can see and interact with people just like you. Building online communities takes more work because of the lack of personal interaction and the diverse population in online environments. Make the effort to get to know and relate to others.

