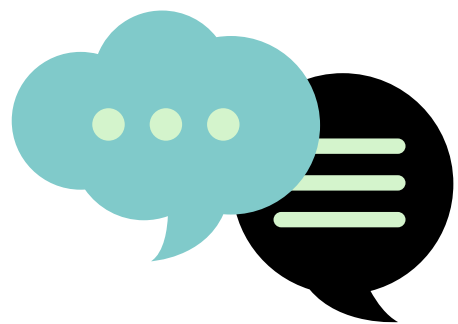


Six Communication Rules for Success in Online Groups

Rule #1: Get Started Right Away

Establishing communication and clear roles immediately is essential. It is critical to create working relationships and positive impressions among group members.



Rule #2: Communicate Frequently

Communication in the remote learning environment must happen more often than in face-to-face settings to build the same level of rapport. A good rule of thumb is to communicate more than you need to. It is best for your group members to never wonder if you are participating in the group.

Rule #3: Get Organized & Do The Work Simultaneously

Negotiate the roles of who is doing what work along the way. It is important to get organized right away, while at the same time starting the project. Time tends to move quickly in online courses, so it is best practice to get working right away (see Rule #1)!



Rule #4: Overtly Acknowledge Each Other

In the virtual group setting, non-verbal acknowledgements are absent. For online group work it's best to recognize all communication, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant, so not to seem as if you're ignoring the group.

Rule #5: Be Explicit

Make sure that you are communicating to your group members what you are thinking and doing in relation to your group's goals. Be proactive and tell the group members what you are thinking about the project. Keep everyone informed!



Rule #6: Set Deadlines & Stick to Them

To prevent uncertainty and anxiety within your group members, don't miss deadlines for even the smallest of tasks. Remember, meeting deadlines builds trust, creates synergy and in the end will create a productive group.

Referenced from Walther, J. B. and Bunz, U. (2005), The Rules of Virtual Groups: Trust, Liking, and Performance in Computer-Mediated Communication. Journal of Communication, 55: 828-846.