Discussion Group Etiquette

- **Do** use meaningful subject lines. Give the reader an idea about the content of the message. If the RE’s add up or the discussion has shifted, change the subject line.
- **Do** think before posting. The immediacy of email means that you can fire off an irate, insulting or even slanderous reply in very fast order. Hitting the "send" button too quickly is an action that many have resoundingly regretted. Before sending, take a deep breath and make
- **Do** be pleasant and polite -- and avoid sarcasm as much as possible (to avoid being misunderstood).
- **Do** respond to each other. In the F2F classroom, students get immediate feedback about their comments by the nods and responses of other students. Online you will need to do the same electronically or your colleagues may feel as they are sending messages into the wind.
- **Do** sign each message with your preferred name or electronic signature. Your email address may not reveal your preferred name.
- **Don't** post your emails in ALL CAPS. Capitalization is used for emphasis in email discussion groups, and all caps is the equivalent to shouting.
- **Do** write and edit your emails to the group carefully, especially when you are new to the group and trying to build a name for yourself. While a discussion group is usually informal in nature, you still want to check for clarity, spelling, and grammar.
- **Don't** attempt to attach files when sending a message to the group. And **don't** try any other fancy formatting (such as bolding, underlining, etc.), as many mail readers cannot properly display this type of formatting.
- **Do** consider emailing specific members of the list directly, rather than sending a message meant for just a few to the entire list. (**Do** this practice when sending a personal message or response, requesting specific information, etc.)
- **Do** keep your messages as concise and relevant to the group as possible.
- **Don't** be too strong or forceful in your early messages, and **don't** be demanding or pushy. Let your network build gradually.
- **Don't** get discouraged if one or members flames you for something you posted to the group, but **do** learn from the experience. And **do** ignore the temptation to flame them back.
- **Do** be respectful and tolerant of others' ideas and opinions.
- **Don't** be afraid to ask for help from the group.
- **Do** build a relationship with individual members (or the entire group). And once you've established a relationship, **do** begin strengthening and nurturing it.
- **Don't** just be a user; **do** try to help other group members whenever possible. Networking should be mutually beneficial in the long-run.