

## Guide to Virtual Classroom Courtesies

There are certain ways to carry yourself, depending on the environment that you are in at the time. You would not act the same way at work as you would at a sporting event. The same is true for learning in a virtual environment. The comfort of being online sometimes allows you to drop your guard and forget that you are still in a classroom situation at work.

Therefore, there are several civilities that you must remember when interacting with your peers and instructors.

### Virtual Classroom Courtesies

#### 1. Be on time

- To ensure everything goes as smoothly as possible, login to the Virtual Classroom at least 15 minutes before the designated start time.
- Return from breaks on time so you don't miss attendance or important information.

#### 2. Be courteous and respectful of others

- Realize that people cannot see your facial expressions and will not know that you are joking or being sarcastic.
- Reread your message before you send it to ensure that it has a friendly and respectful tone. You want to keep your messages professional!
- The Virtual Classroom is not the forum for rants or raves, political and religious discussions or personal opinions. Please be considerate of the variety of learners attending an online training.

#### 3. Use the Chat box thoughtfully

- While typing in the group chat box, do not use standard "text talk" or "IM lingo". Take the time to clarify your statement and type it out fully.
- Using a larger font impedes the flow of chat for everyone. When it is a large class, comments can get easily lost. Using a font larger than size 12 takes up more space than necessary and forces other comments to not be seen.
- Use a dark color font; it makes the comments and questions easier to read.
- Don't type in **ALL CAPS**. In the virtual world, typing in ALL CAPS is the equivalent of yelling.

**4. Ensure all questions and comments are related to the training**

- Conversation in the chat box can be very distracting. Limiting the conversation to content specific questions and comments will minimize this distraction.
- If the comment is not training related, please rethink posting it, ensuring it is relevant to the entire group.
- It is very important to stay on topic. Comments, emoticons or reactions to what was said are not necessary and distract your peers. Remember to keep it professional at all times.
- Don't ask "What if" questions. If there is a specific scenario you feel you must ask about, email or IM the instructor outside of class time.

**5. Interact with the instructors (and other students) appropriately**

- If you have questions that you need addressed, wait for a pause in the instruction or let the instructor know in the group chat that you would like to unmute your mic to ask a question.
- When you do address the class, start with your name and location. For example, "This is Stephanie from Des Moines." This is a common courtesy and lets the instructor know whom he or she is addressing.

**6. Ensure your microphone is muted**

- Sometimes you may inadvertently unmute your microphone. Before speaking to someone near you, please make sure that your mic is muted. You may not want something meant for one person to be heard by all.

**7. Limit distractions in the training room or office**

- While this setting is a Virtual Classroom, many of you are participating in the class in a training room or office at your station. Understand that everyone learns differently and what might not be distracting to you, can be extremely distracting to others in your class. Side conversations and comments should be kept to a minimum.

**8. Remember: Everything is recorded**

- *Chat:* The group chat is saved in the Conversation history of the attendees. Therefore, this document can be referenced at any point. Please do not say anything you don't want people to see at a later date.
- *Audio:* All of Virtual Classroom sessions are recorded. Do not say anything that you do not want others to hear at a later date.