

What Are the Communication 'Musts' in an Online Class?

Presented by:

Jill Schiefelbein



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The Five “Musts”

This handout provides an overview of the five communication musts for any online class. It also includes the policy on Hallway Conversations (number two) that is used at ASU Online.

“Must” #1: Instructor Introduction and Course Expectation Videos

When making the instructor introduction, you should be sure to do the following:

- introduce yourself
- creative credentials
- give personality

When making the course expectations video, you should be sure to explain the following:

- set-up for success
- communication policies
- time usage
- late policies
- grading notes

“Must” #2: Hallway Conversations

In a "face-to-face" course, there are a lot of things that go on around the classroom before and after class, the "Hallway Conversations" discussion forum replicates this environment. This forum is for general questions about the course. This is a good place to ask questions about due dates, assignments, technology issues, and any other items related to the course in general. Please check to see if your question has already been asked before posting it. Also, you are encouraged to answer the questions of other students and socialize here.

Used at and written by ASU Online

“Must” #3: Voice Announcements aka Housekeeping

When creating voice announcements, each one should contain:

- about the week (or unit) including due dates
- about the content
- personal message and instructor observations

“Must” #4: Quarterly Check-Ins

Each quarterly check-in, done via email or an alternative channel, should include:

- current grade and grading scale
- encouragement
- points remaining
- feedback opportunity

“Must” #5: Genuine Connection

Create real opportunities for your students to connect with you, on a personal and academic level, and you can achieve a genuine connection. I like to send out or post periodic “feelers” about certain topics and relate them to course content.

The “Musts” in Action

The following three pages give you screen shots of some samples of the communication “musts” in action in my online courses. The technology(ies) used are listed and linked for your convenience.

“Must” #1: Instructor Introduction and Course Expectation Videos

This video was created in a studio at ASU Online, but I’ve done many other videos with a webcam in my office. I like the Logitech HD Quickcam Pro 905 model the best right now. Good quality for the price. I use Vimeo to upload my videos because it gives me more privacy control than YouTube, but either are good and come with easy-to-use embed codes.

Webcam: <http://www.logitech.com/en-us/webcam-communications/webcams/devices/6600>

Vimeo: <http://vimeo.com>

YouTube: <http://youtube.com>



“Must” #2: Hallway Conversations

Here is a sample of what the introduction screen looks like in my “Hallway Conversations” area. The rest functions like a standard discussion board.

Hallway Conversations

Discussion Participation

- When you are the first to contribute to the discussion, you will see only the + **Respond** link
- If others have posted, you will see their comments, along with the + **Respond** link
 - If there is more than one topic for discussion, the first topic is displayed.
 - To select a different topic, click on the corresponding link in the Topics list.
- The + **Respond** link – as well as any responses – will be displayed at the bottom of the page
- If you do not see the + **Respond** link, or any responses, you may need to scroll down the page

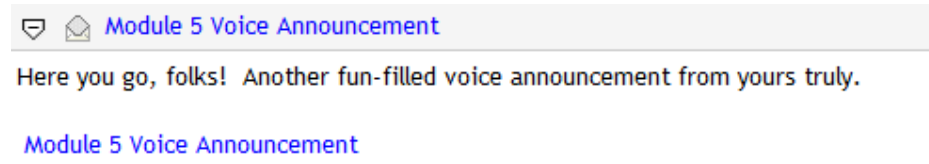
“Must” #3: Voice Announcements aka Housekeeping

Here are two different options for voice recording on announcements. The first is an audio recording I did using Microsoft’s Sound Recorder (you can use Apple’s Garage Band as well, but I prefer Audacity on the Mac) and then embedded it in my course site. The second is using Wimba’s built-in collaboration suite “Voice Authoring” tool in Blackboard.

Sound Recorder: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sound_Recorder_\(Windows\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sound_Recorder_(Windows))

Garage Band: <http://www.apple.com/ilife/garageband/>

Audacity: <http://audacity.sourceforge.net/>



Week of April 9th... ▾

Please listen to this voice announcement. Thank you!



“Must” #4: Quarterly Check-Ins

The quarterly check-ins should happen 25%, 50%, and 75% of the way through your course session—no matter what the duration of the course is.

“Must” #5: Genuine Connection

This is a sample of VoiceThread in one of my classes. At the beginning of the session, I have students post videos of themselves for their introductions. This creates genuine connections in the classroom, and puts faces to the text and audio that they will turn in later during the semester.

VoiceThread: <http://voicethread.com>

Meet Your Classmates

Using the video comment feature on VoiceThread, post a quick introduction of yourself. First, listen to my post for instructions. I look forward to “meeting” each of you virtually!

