

# Course Expectations Discussion Board / Lesson for Online English Courses (Grades 11-12)

Developed by Fabio Cominotti for consideration by IDLA during EDTECH 524 – Experience in Online Teaching at Boise State University. March, 2014

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## Rationale / Needs Assessment

Online classrooms traditionally suffer from a lack of community. Students and instructors simply don't develop the natural relationships and sense of community that form in a face-to-face setting. That is to say that the relationships don't form if the online instructor, instructional designer, or facilitator does not introduce activities at the beginning of the course and throughout (more at the beginning) that help to foster community, allow students to get to know each other, and start to break down those walls.

The following activities have a several purposes. One aspect of online classrooms that tends to be weak or non-existent is expectations. Learners often suffer from a lack of understanding of what is expected of them. Also, instructors usually don't know what is expected of them from their learners.

In this lesson, the instructor will present the expectations of the learners. I have provided sample expectations that I would include in my online courses as well as a sample attention getter video. Then after viewing the presentation, students will complete a discussion board activity in which they convey what the course expectations mean to them with some analysis and they will also present two expectations that they have of the course and instructor along with a rationale of their expectations. Students will also respond to two peer posts.

## Learning Outcomes

- 1.) The learners learn what is expected of them and have time to interact with and analyze those expectations as they complete the writing activities.
- 2.) The learners gain practice in critical thinking as they synthesize, present, and discuss their expectations of the course and instructor on a discussion board.
- 3.) Since this lesson takes place very near the beginning of a course, the instructor can gain an understanding of the learners current writing, organizational, and critical thinking skills at the beginning of the course which has several benefits:
  - a. It provides a baseline for measuring improvement during the course of the semester.
  - b. It provides instructor with an idea of which students might need interventions and what types of differentiation might be needed at the beginning of the course.
- 4.) The learners and instructor will begin to get a sense of who they are participating in class with.

- 5.) The instructor can begin to get to know and understand thinking processes of the learners.
- 6.) The learners can start to get a sense of their instructor through the discussion boards.
- 7.) A sense of community can start to build that can be bolstered through other activities in the course.

### **Idaho Content Standards Addressed in this Module for Grade 11-12 Language Arts.**

**W.11-12.2.** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

- a. Introduce a topic; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information so that each new element builds on that which precedes it to create a unified whole; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
- b. Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.
- c. Use appropriate and varied transitions and syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.
- d. Use precise language, domain-specific vocabulary, and techniques such as metaphor, simile, and analogy to manage the complexity of the topic.
- e. Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
- f. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).

**W.11-12.4.** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)

**W.11-12.6.** Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information.

**W.11-12.10.** Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

**SL.11-12.2.** Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

**L.11-12.1.** Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

**L.11-12.2.** Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

- a. Observe hyphenation conventions.
- b. Spell correctly.

**L.11-12.6.** Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

## **Materials**

[Compressed \(.ZIP\) Archive of Materials](#)

[Design Document \(this document\)](#)

[Course Expectations PowerPoint Presentation](#)

[Kindergarten Cop – Setting Classroom Rules \(MP4 File\)](#)

[Kindergarten Cop – Setting Classroom Rules \(AVI File\)](#)

[Generic Discussion Board Rubric \(IDLA\)](#)

Please see page 4 for a design prototype of the learning module created in Blackboard Courseites.

**Note: This lesson can easily be adapted for other language arts courses. With a few more modifications, it could be adapted for humanities and science courses as well.**

# Design Prototype

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## Course Expectations

### Welcome to the course. (Main Lesson)

For this first module, we will discuss and learn what is expected of you in the course and what you expect to take away from the course and how I can best help you.

### Objectives

By the end of this module you will:

- Be able to name and explain what is expected of you from this course and instructor.
- Be able to identify and explain what you expect from this course and your instructor.

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- k. Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
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Please watch the following YouTube Video.



**YouTube**

**URL:** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mce3yiMF4jQ>

Used under fair use guidelines.

*Kindergarten Cop.* Dir. Ivan Reitman.  
Perf. Arnold Schwarzenegger,  
Penelope Ann Miller, Pamela  
Reed. Universal Pictures, 1990.  
Youtube.com.

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**The preceding image is a placeholder for a video or interactivity to be inserted here.**

Okay, so I'm not as strict and angry as good old Schwarzenegger as a Kindergarten teacher, but I do have some expectations of you during this course. Please take a look at the PowerPoint presentation below.



**The image to the left is a placeholder for an actual PowerPoint Presentation or interactivity that presents the course and / or instructor expectations.**

Now those aren't too bad. Right?

Please complete the discussion board for this module.

You will be graded for this discussion on the [following rubric](#). Don't worry, it's mostly on effort.

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### **DB1-Course Expectations (Discussion Board)**

For this initial post, you need to write three paragraphs. Please read and respond to your classmate's posts as well.

1.) Write, in your own words, what the course expectations mean to you.

- How do they affect your thoughts about the course?
- Will they be easy to follow? Are they too lax or too extreme?
- Please, let me know your opinion. I am always interested.
- If you have any questions about my expectations or the syllabus and course schedule, you can include those in this first paragraph.

2.) For your second and third paragraphs, please list two expectations (one in each paragraph) that you have for me or that you expect to get out of the course.

- This is where you get to voice your opinion and help to shape the interactions in the course.
- I want to know what you expect from me so that I can strive to meet those expectations. Teaching and learning is not a one-way street. It's a give and take. Please let your voice be heard.
- In your paragraphs, please discuss your expectation. Let me know why you expect it and how I can meet it.
- Feel free to use examples from your past as well.
- If you have more than two expectations, please add paragraphs. I'm here to help you, so let me know the best way I can.

3.) And finally, respond to a minimum of two peers.

- Do you agree or disagree with their expectations?
- Why?
- Be thorough in your responses.

4.) Before posting, please review the rubric for this discussion board assignment. [Discussion Board Rubric](#)

**Grading Rubric—15 points possible**

	<b>5 pts.</b>	<b>4 pts.</b>	<b>3 pts.</b>
<b>Initial Post</b>	Posted early to ensure sufficient time to respond to classmates Posted sufficient detail to completely address the discussion board prompt	Posted by the end of the unit, but did not allow time for others to comment Posted enough detail to cover the prompt but could have expanded and explained points more thoroughly	Posted after the unit deadline Minimal detail that required more explanation in order to clearly understand points
<b>Responses</b>	Responded to at least 2 classmates prior to the end of the unit Replied to questions from classmates in response to original post	Responded to at least 2 classmates	Responded to one classmate
<b>Correctness</b>	No distracting errors—followed expectations for online communication as outlined in Netiquette presentation	1-2 distracting errors	Some distracting errors Used slang, acronyms, or emoticons in original post (Review the netiquette presentation for appropriate online communication expectations)

Rubric, originally created from Idaho Digital Learning Academy. No modifications were made.