

## Establishing an Appropriate Online Tone

Online discussions are a text-based medium where you, the writer, need to carefully consider your subject, purpose, audience, and context. Moreover, you need to establish a tone with your students that fosters discussions and deepens student learning.

### Benefits of a Positive Tone

#### What?

A positive tone sets the stage where a respectful dialogue can help deepen learning, foster a culture of risk taking, keep misunderstandings to a minimum, and create a pleasurable online learning environment.

#### How?

Select a tone that supports reflection:

- Select a tone that is based on a specific message context.
- Do NOT select a tone for personal reflection.
- Select a tone that motivates learners

#### Helpful Tips

**Neutral** tones are safe, but boring.  
**Humor** if done carefully can liven a discussion.

**Analytical** tones offer an analysis usually with a neutral tone.

**Curious** tones help to probe without grilling the learner.

**Informal** tones help to ease up touchy topics.

**Nurturing** tones can be used to redirect discussions going in the wrong direction.

**Whimsical** and **inspiring** tones motivate learners to dig deeper.

#### HINT!

Excellent response here, [Student]!

Class, [Student] brings up an interesting point: "whatever student's interesting point is". Insert your own thoughts here to elaborate on the point or relate the student's comments to the course material.]

Then, insert a follow-up question using a selected tone based on the context of the discussion. [i.e., a curious tone] "I am curious if you think the opposite assumption might be true?"