

Industry Insights

How important is email in your business? What are some best practices you use for email with customers, clients, colleagues, etc.? Explain.

Email is essential to ...

Pass on information that is hard to retain in a conversation: "It is a way to communicate with clients and pass information that is hard to retain from a conversation. I try to keep emailing concise."

—Brandon Mitchell (Veterinarian)

Make decisions: "Email is extremely important. All communication with clients is done through email. All call sheets, mood boards, inspirations for advertising and marketing is done through email sent by the clients directly to us. It is crucial for our job."

—Judy Jacomino (Makeup and Hair Artist)

Serve as an official conduit for multiple audiences: "Emails can have legal and business repercussions, and therefore every employee must carefully consider everything that is stated or conveyed in emails. Oftentimes emails may be filtered through a few representatives such as project engineers or project managers to be the official conduit for communication."

—Matthew Guerrieri (Electrical Engineer)

Document timelines and processes: "It's one of the primary ways that we communicate with other members of our team outside of our company (e.g., title companies, realtors). We are also communicating via email with our customers. Being able to quickly know where we are in a transaction is very important to running our business efficiently."

—Melissa Johnson (VP/CFO in Real Estate)

Email must ...

Be accurate and impartial: "Particularly in health care, written communication with patients and fellow practitioners must be 100% accurate. The information conveyed should be factual and impartial, not based on personal emotions or opinions. Also, patient confidentiality and legal concerns such as maintaining HIPPA compliance have to be at the forefront of every electronic communication."

—Kati Ohlmeyer (MS, RDN, LD)

Value the recipient: "The tone of electronic communications can easily be misinterpreted. We begin every communication with a thank you—the recipient needs to know we appreciate the value of their time. Second, we utilize 'I' as few times as possible. In order to avoid or prevent miscommunication from escalating, if something emotional is being discussed, the conversation is moved to a phone or video call."

—Jacob Hanson (Managing Partner With PR with Panache)

Strike the right tone: "In law and related fields strong written communication skills are imperative. So much of business is conducted via email that consistently striking the right tone and conveying the right (and right amount of) information determines whether your message is really 'received.'"

—Kristy Peters (Principal at Litigation Finance Company)

Prioritize clarity over brevity: "Email is often used to communicate with people who lack the technical depth to understand the content of the message. Even if the message is targeted to a technical audience, it may still be distributed to those who are not. It is important to prioritize clarity over being concise in almost all situations because of this."

—Justin Hammond (Cloud Networks Engineer)

Be courteous: "Email is our primary tool for external communication. We always hedge on the side of courtesy and clarity, never assuming that tone can be interpreted. We are respectful of the reader, and keep messages succinct, with a call to action to read further (or click a link) below the sign off."

—Reshan Richards (Chief Learning Officer at Explain Everything)

CHAPTER 1

Email Etiquette

Communicating with peers and professionals to elicit an action or response through clear communication, self-advocacy, and due diligence

“What really leads to miscommunications is a lack of empathy.”

—Sasha VanHoven (Social Media Producer at the Wirecutter)

You might find it odd to devote the first chapter of this book to email. However, if you view email as the on ramp to other forms of digital communication, you will quickly see that it impacts every other chapter, whether it be with email correspondences or having an email account to create another account (e.g., Evernote, LinkedIn, Twitter). Furthermore, for better or worse, the brevity and accelerated nature of text messages and a variety of social networks has naturally bled into the way we communicate through other channels. Additionally, based on the findings from *Are They Really Ready to Work?* that discovered deficits by both high school graduates and 2- and 4-year graduates in the areas of English and Written Communications, it seemed as best a place as any to journey into communication innovations (*Are They Really Ready to Work?*, 2006).

Why Are We Talking About Email for Students?

When I first started with iPads in 2011, my campuses had several carts and were using iPad 1's as shared devices. As students created something or needed to email off a product, they had to use a class email account or a class Dropbox account,

as our district did not provide email addresses to the students at that time. The workflow process from the device was cumbersome to say the least. Now with the growing prevalence of mobile devices in schools, the idea of email for students is less of a nice to have and more of a must have. Students now require email accounts for access to GAFE (Google Apps for Education) tools like Google Docs, Sheets, Slides, and Calendar, as well as other apps and tools like Canva, Tackk, and Thinglink that are used in the classroom.

While many of us can remember a day without emails . . . a day that might have included handwritten or typed communications and addressing envelopes, this reality is a science fiction flashback at best for your students. I imagine most of you are like me and find email to be a necessary evil. Most adults have been marinating an email account for 15–20 years or more in some form or format and have sent countless electronic correspondences. Some of you may have even experienced email overload and sought out creative life hacks to remove the electronic clutter. But the majority of our secondary students are just emerging into this reality. Some of the best practices of this communication tool may seem obvious to us, but not to the novice.

Interestingly enough, the majority of our secondary students have a school email account (and many times a personal one) and rarely check either one, only to find out that this seems to be the main mode of communication in college and most careers. There is little question that it is an integral part of the adult world and most likely will continue to be for the foreseeable future. College and career readiness doesn't mean replicating college and career settings in high school. This means providing opportunities to not only stress the importance of this type of communication, but also leverage our curriculum to support clear messaging with this form of writing and literacy.

How Do We Ensure Best Practices for Using Email?

If you have ever read the circular tale *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie*, where the mouse asks for something, which then leads to asking for something else, then you might feel that way about emails. If I give a student an email, they might send out something inappropriate. If they send out something inappropriate, we might have a parent complain to the district. If a parent complains to the district, then we might have to shut down emails for all of the students. In fact, I actually worked with a district that had restricted the camera on all of their mobile devices for this very reason. Teachers had to submit a work ticket request to allow use of the camera for a 24-hour period on their classroom devices. I know this may seem extreme, but it may also resonate with some of you. Sometimes we have to take the parenting view though. If we give students email accounts, then they will be able to make mistakes and also learn with our support. If they make mistakes in a walled garden and learn





appropriate use, they will be less likely to inappropriately use this technology when they leave our institution. Let's face it. An inappropriate email in school may cause them a suspension and some embarrassment, but an inappropriate email in their career could cost them their job.


Understanding the nature of when and why email should be used in the first place is essential to beginning this journey. For example, if I am sending an attachment or longer communication, an email might be preferable. But if I just need a quick answer to a question, need to address a concern, or have an ongoing discussion, then I might text someone or send a direct message on Twitter, Facebook, or Slack. We do have to remember that recipients aren't always on or available and having the "text a peer or professional" option doesn't necessarily support personal problem-solving either. That being said, I was recently sitting in a classroom when a student (not in the classroom) texted another student (in the classroom) to ask the teacher if she could make up the test fifth period. Like you I was first shocked and appalled at the casual nature of this communication. But then I flipped the perspective a bit. If I know my co-worker is with another co-worker and I need a quick answer to a question, I might text that co-worker to ask the other one the question. Too often we prepare curriculum for the world we live in and don't consider that the format of existing communications will naturally evolve as our students become that future. We can't future proof them, but we can provide them with the ability to problem-solve and think critically about how they communicate now and in the future. Posing the question to your students, "In what situations would email be the best tool and in what situations would it not be?" not only honors their current communication practices, but opens the door for discussing best practices (with whatever tools they use).

Students do in fact communicate using a variety of tools, but these tools do not necessarily support them with college and career communications. Texting is typically used to inform someone or give him or her a heads up (e.g., "hey I will be staying late for tutoring today") or to gain a response (e.g., "hey can you bring my lunch . . . I forgot it at home"), but texts are typically brief and informal. Emails tend to be more formal, longer, and they are on the record as they are through a school-issued service. Additionally, we typically only get a few texts at a time because only friends and family text us (or a few co-workers), but everyone in your place of work has your email, so this adds an extra layer of importance as you then have to prioritize your responses. If you are supporting a profession with a customer service or client component, then email becomes a vital way to provide support in a clear, timely, positive, and efficient manner.

Part of this future proofing is providing frameworks for students to problem-solve and make educated decisions before they enter college and the workforce. Rather than dictating rules in a campus or district email contract, having discussions that lead students to the answers through thoughtful discourse with peers and professionals

(e.g., teachers, counselors) can be far more powerful. This idea of “Conversations Before Contracts” was the impetus for me to create an Email Etiquette Communication Catcher (Figure 1.1) to facilitate these types of conversations. It is intended to be used with students to spark thoughtful discussion and dialog around these topics. The resource is included in Appendix B and can be downloaded at <https://resources.corwin.com/cultivatingcomm>.

	wwyo (What Would You Open?) What emails do you open based on the subject line?	wwyr (What Would You Read?) Does brevity and clarity of an email impact your ability to read it?	
On the Record Think about the texts you send. Would it change what you sent to know that they were "on the record"?	Brainstorm some alternate titles for emailing a teacher or office. How do you address a colleague or peer? Emails are always on the record. What types of things would and would not be appropriate to send via email?	Brainstorm some alternate ways to make a text or email easier to read. What are some things that you can do to organize your email?	Organization How do you organize your school notes?
Take That Back Have you ever sent a text that you wish you could retrieve?	What can you do to ensure that you don't regret that you provided a response to someone if you need more time to make a decision or complete the task?	What types of information would not be appropriate to share in an email? How can you prevent your email accounts from being compromised? Who should you tell if you suspect a scam email?	That's Private Think about what information you do and don't share on social media.
	No Response How do you feel when you send a text or post something on social media and receive no response?	Click on Me Have you ever received a strange email that asked you to click on a link?	



1. **Cut:** Cut out Email Etiquette Communication Catcher and turn over with text side down.
2. **Fold:** Fold like a Cootie Catcher.
3. **Play:** Insert fingers in four corners.
4. **Interact:** Determine who has the greatest number of email accounts, and use that number to move the Communication Catcher.
5. **Choice:** Read the directions for the activity you land on by opening the flap. Complete the discussion.

Figure 1.1 Email Etiquette Communication Catcher

Available for download at <https://resources.corwin.com/cultivatingcomm>

While conversations are integral, our current reality does have to ensure legal responsibility for inappropriate use, so having a district email contract or an acceptable use policy is necessary in addition to these conversations. Just remember that students have a lot more buy-in when they are front-loaded with conversations before contracts.

How Do We Support Clear Communication Through Email?

While the Communication Catcher in Figure 1.1 dives into acceptable use and briefly delves into clear communication (e.g., “What would you open?”; “What would you read?,” No Response), additional conversations and support will most likely be needed to scaffold this skill. Email is ultimately an invitation for communication. The very nature of invitations is asking for some sort of response, whether it be an acknowledgment or a specific action. If the email or message is cluttered or unclear, the response may be less than what was requested. We can’t predict how long we will have email and if this generation of texters and tweeters will slowly impact this form of communication as they enter the workforce. What we can do is provide them with guides and opportunities to craft communications that invite the desired response. In my experience, the desired response ultimately hinges on two things: audience and action.

- **Audience:** If the audience is a professor, then they will most likely want to have a more formal approach. If the audience is a co-worker or a friend, then a less formal, more casual approach that includes emoticons might be applicable. Audience can get even more granular if you look at it in the context of differentiated instruction. People use different strategies to communicate with different types of people. When it is appropriate to use Reply versus Reply All or CC and BCC is also a useful skill to teach as choosing the wrong one can be a social faux pas.
- **Action:** Because I have received so many bad emails and have to sift through paragraphs of wonkily formatted vague text to figure out what information is important and what I am supposed to do with said information, I have been hypersensitive to designing my emails to juxtapose this condition. Students write in some form or format K–12. Reminding them that emails are just another form of writing and that this type has a delineated set of rules and best practices, much like a persuasive essay, tends to make this acclimation easier.

Here are some guidelines you can pass along to your students:

- **Actionable Descriptive Subject Line:** Subject lines are key. Make them descriptive and give the recipient a heads up on the action requested (e.g., “Please Review My Assignment” or “Discussing Extension on Project”).

- **Questions/Action Items:** I don't ever want someone to read my email and have no idea what I was asking them to do. I try to make my requests and notices easy to digest by including questions that are then answered within the email (see Figures 1.3 and 1.4 later in this chapter).
- **Clear Formatting (e.g., bullets, bold, spacing):** While grammar and spelling is important, most email services will scan for these. Much like a textbook uses formatting to draw attention to questions, important words, and ideas, I use bullets, bold, and spacing to organize the message (see Figures 1.3 and 1.4).
- **Clear Self-Advocacy and Due Diligence:** Sometimes emails can feel just like a laundry list of to-do's, each one with a specific task. Students should be reminded that email is an important way to advocate for themselves by communicating issues with completing deadlines or quandaries with a project. Many teachers' biggest pet peeves are not student or staff emails, but people not doing due diligence. If you send me an email about something discussed in class, consider approaching the email with the "Ask 3" model (e.g., "Dear Mr. Bronsan, I will be out next week for ACL surgery. I looked at the online class calendar, reviewed the course website, and asked one of my third-period classmates about assignments for that week, but couldn't find any. Please let me know what work I will be missing, so I can begin collecting those assignments prior to my absence.") This type of communication honors the recipient's time and allows our students to be proactive self-advocates.

I know it may seem silly or redundant, but if your email address is only on your teacher website or some handout you had at the front of the room



Figure 1.2 “We Are Away But Not Absent” Email Tear Sheet

on parent night, odds are that students won't remember what it is. As I am in a support position and not assigned to a classroom, I have students drop by my office each and every day. When the light is on, but I am not there, they may complain and lament I am “never there” rather than being proactive and finding alternate means to communicate with me, especially if their needs or inquiries are time sensitive. To facilitate their self-advocacy, I have a flier that has my picture, a communication that makes it clear that just because I am not in my office does not mean that I am not on campus, and tear sheets that provide students with quick access to email, shown in Figure 1.2.

While this may look slightly different for a classroom teacher and might include class periods present and the teacher's website, the idea is one that ultimately takes away excuses and puts the ownership of communication and problem-solving back in the student's hands.

Audience and action are important, but ferreting out specific guidelines utilizing actual examples is vital to supporting clear communication and to even troubleshooting revising emails. Take the example given in Figure 1.3. Both essentially say the same thing, but the one on the bottom uses bullets and bolded text to make it easier for the recipient to decipher the information.

When asking for a favor rather than just alerting someone of a change or an event, you want to be very specific with your communication as well as respectful and

Before

Subject: Future Student Devices: Final 4

The final 4 devices are set up and ready for review in the library. The contenders are a MacBook Air 11", iPad Air 2 with Keyboard Case, Dell Latitude 3350, and Dell ChromeBook. Each device is charged, ready for you to explore, and has a placard with detailed specs. We are also providing a [spreadsheet with additional specs](#) of all 4 devices side by side. Mandy and/or I will be available during 4th and 5th to answer questions and provide additional clarification as needed.

After

Subject: *** Future Student Devices: Final Four ***

The Final Four devices are set up and ready for review in the library.

- **Contenders:** MacBook Air 11", iPad Air 2 with Keyboard Case, Dell Latitude 3350, and Dell ChromeBook.
- **Explore:** Each device is charged, ready for you to explore, and has a placard with detailed specs.
- **Deeper Details:** We are also providing a [spreadsheet with additional specs](#) of all 4 devices side by side.
- **On Site Ed Tech:** Mandy and/or I will be available during 4th and 5th to answer questions and provide additional clarification as needed.

Come and kick the tires. :)
M&L

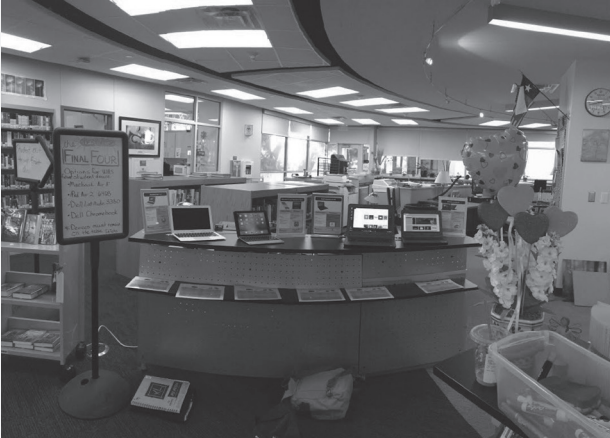


Figure 1.3 Revised Email Example 1

grateful of their time. The email in Figure 1.4 is what I used to send out to fellow colleagues when I was gathering contextual feedback for the book. The one on the top has a subject line that sounds pushy, whereas the one on the bottom acknowledges the value that the recipient will add to the intended response. The email on the bottom uses bullets, bold formatting, and questions to make it very clear what is needed from the recipient and when it is needed. Finally, the email on the bottom also clearly states how long the intended action will take (e.g., “It should take no more than 5–10 minutes to complete.”) and expresses gratitude for this time and effort (e.g., “Thanks in advance.”).

Before

Subject: Hey, Hey Fill Out My Survey

I am finally getting to the final stages of the book. I would love for you to complete the survey based on the work you do with Explain Everything (especially with global collaboration and teams) . . . The book is titled “Cultivating Communication in the Classroom” and will be published by Corwin. It is designed to support secondary teachers with best practices, research, and practical ways to support college and career readiness skills within their core curriculum. The book focuses on Communication skills (e.g., email, collaboration and teams, presentation skills, social media, curation, resumes, online portfolios . . .). I am looking to gather information from a variety of careers and industry leaders to support the book with real-world contextual examples and anecdotes. I have crafted the survey below. It should take no more than 5–10 minutes to complete. I would greatly appreciate your support with sharing your insight and expertise from your career and industry lens. The book is nearing the final stages so I would greatly appreciate your kind but expedient attention to providing feedback.;

Communication Skills Survey Google Form

After

Subject: ***Your Input Matters: Communication Skills Survey ***

So . . . finally getting to the final stages of the book. I would love for you to complete the survey based on the work you do with Explain Everything (especially with global collaboration and teams) . . .

- **What is the book about?** The book is titled “Cultivating Communication in the Classroom” and will be published by Corwin. It is designed to support secondary teachers with best practices, research, and practical ways to support college and career readiness skills within their core curriculum. The book focuses on Communication skills (e.g., email, collaboration and teams, presentation skills, social media, curation, resumes, online portfolios . . .).
- **What do I need?** I am looking to gather information from a variety of careers and industry leaders to support the book with real-world contextual examples and anecdotes. I have crafted the survey below. It should take no more than 5–10 minutes to complete. I would greatly appreciate your support with sharing your insight and expertise from your career and industry lens.
- **When do I need it?** The book is nearing the final stages so I would greatly appreciate your kind but expedient attention to providing feedback. ;)

Thanks in advance!

Communication Skills Survey Google Form

Figure 1.4 Revised Email Example 2

Sometimes we miss an email or need more time to complete the action or make a decision. Teaching students that a response is better than no response at all is vital to clear communication and setting clear expectations. The following examples highlight simple ways to supply an interim response in lieu of no response at all. Elizabeth Grace Saunders has fantastic quick default response emails (Figure 1.5)

<p>When you need more time to write a thorough response:</p>	<p>When you need additional time or want to request a deadline extension:</p>
<p>Thank you for your message. I'll get back to you shortly with a more thorough response.</p>	<p>I want to keep you updated on the current status of the project. We've made some great progress but in the process discovered that [fill in the issue] takes longer than we had initially anticipated. Would it be reasonable to have an additional week to account for the unexpected delay?</p>
<p>When you need additional time to make a decision:</p>	<p>When someone has requested your support or help with a project but you feel like you can't take on any additional projects:</p>
<p>Thank you for your email. I'll take some time to consider the alternatives and get back to you with my decision.</p>	<p>I really appreciate your coming to me. I would love to help, but unfortunately I'm at capacity right now and can't give this project the time and attention it requires.</p>
<p>To apologize for a delayed response:</p>	<p>When someone asks you to complete an additional project but does not provide any clarification as to the resources needed, the process utilized, or the timeline:</p>
<p>Thank you for your understanding about my delayed response. [XYZ] has been happening.</p>	<p>Thanks for sending on this project. I would be happy to move forward on it but need more clarity on the scope of the work. Can we set up a time to discuss this more?</p>
<p>When you would like to provide project updates but are not finished with the project:</p>	<p>When you don't feel comfortable responding via email:</p>
<p>I've completed [bullet point, bullet point, bullet point]. On Friday, I'll send a status update on my additional progress.</p>	<p>[Pick up the phone or schedule an in-person meeting.]</p>
<p>When you need additional support or materials to complete a project:</p>	<p>When people ask you about everything instead of directly contacting the appropriate person:</p>
<p>I'm excited to start on this project, and I'll need this additional support and materials to move forward [list out specifics].</p>	<p>Just wanted to let you know that I received your email, and [fill in the person] is the best person to help you with that request.</p>

Figure 1.5 “Email Is for Setting Expectations” by Elizabeth Grace Saunders

Source: Elizabeth Grace Saunders, time management coach and author of *How to Invest Your Time Like Money*

that provide helpful wording to acknowledge an email and ask for more time to provide a solution or informed response.

Try pairing some of the strategies for clear communication and setting expectations with the authentic curricular opportunities detailed later in the chapter.

How Can I Troubleshoot Email With My Students?

While the bulk of this chapter has focused more on global questions, which are great fodder for conversations, and granular practices for clear communication within the body of an email, there is always a need for practical troubleshooting strategies. As more and more student creations are generated digitally, students will inevitably encounter technical issues that will need to be resolved. As file storage increases (a decade ago a 128 MB flash drive would suffice for a whole year's worth of documents, and now a 4 GB flash drive will barely hold a few videos and a slide deck), students will have to utilize file management and storage to their advantage. While this may not be an issue for schools and districts that utilize GAFE (Google Apps for Education) or a LMS (Learning Management System) like Canvas or eBackpack, it is a reality for those that don't have access to these tools.

- **What types of formats are acceptable to send in an email?** Many times students send emails with an attachment to an assignment. Due to the variety of devices and software applications, mismatches occur. For example, a student sends a Pages document, and the teacher only has Word to open it. A good rule of thumb for students is to always send a .pdf version of the document to be reviewed. While .pdf requires an extra add-on or tool like Adobe to annotate or comment, it is an universal format that all devices can easily access.
- **What will you do when a file is too large for email?** This is by far one of the most prevalent issues I have seen. Many times it involves students trying to share videos. The easiest fix is to upload the video to a site like YouTube, Vimeo, or Google Drive and then share the link.
- **What protocols need to be set up for file sharing?** If a student is working on Google Doc and wants to allow the teacher or fellow student viewing or editing access, they have to set that up within the document. Oftentimes mismatches occur when students try to share a document from a school account to someone's personal account that is not within the school domain. While it is a pretty easy issue to resolve, file sharing will continue to be on our radar as more and more content becomes digital in nature and stored in the cloud.
- **Will you use your personal or school email to create accounts?** I always encourage students to use their school email to create additional accounts. However, as students get to be juniors and seniors, they tend to want to transition their accounts for life beyond our 12-year academia. This is especially important for the portfolios and blogs that students would like to continue to

groom. It is also essential for students to have an email that they have access to year round if they are applying for college or jobs.

Each one of these questions directly relates to an encounter I have had with students, whether it be scenarios students have shared or overarching issues I have observed or had to troubleshoot.

How Can I Provide Authentic Curricular Opportunities for Email Communication?

Teaching email can be a pretty bland topic, unless it is used in context. Below are a few options for teachers to weave this type of communication into the classroom:


- **Emails From the Past:** Have students compose an email from someone in the past (e.g., Lincoln, Napoleon, Marie Curie, Shakespeare) to address an issue or a concern. What would F. Scott Fitzgerald email his editor? What would Andy Warhol email his mother? What would Muhammad Ali’s coach email him? What would emails between Richard Nixon and his secretary look like? For more information, ideas, or research on this topic, check out *The Who, the What, and the When: 65 Artists Illustrate the Secret Sidekicks of History*.
- **Future Me:** Have students write an email to their future self to be delivered at a future date. The website futureme.org allows them to achieve this. This is also a fantastic goal-setting exercise to explore at the beginning of the year.
- **Ask Me:** While most students aren’t familiar with the Dear Abby letters, the idea is a good one to reboot. Consider having students practice handling concerns via email. This is less about email and more about problem-solving and persuasive language through the vehicle of email. Many careers handle customer emails or employee concerns. Using a framework like CARP (e.g., Control, Acknowledge, Refocus, Problem-Solve) is useful. Carl Hooker, Director of Innovations for Eanes ISD, uses three email challenges to screen candidates for educational technologist positions. Responding to student, parent, teacher, and administrator communications is an integral part of the job.
- **Persuade Me:** Many emails embody strategies similar to that of a persuasive paper. Rather than having students write a persuasive letter, consider using a RAFTS (e.g., Role, Audience, Format, Topic, Strong Verb). The format is an email, so we have that part covered. One example from the WritingFix.com generator was: “You will write as though you are . . . *a history textbook writer* . . . writing something to be read or heard by . . . *the local school board*. The writing will take the format of . . . *an email* . . . and will be about ‘*The Bill of Rights*.’ Your piece of writing’s purpose will be to . . . *INSPIRE* your audience to act now” (“HistoryFix,” 1999).

- **Miss Me:** One way to foster relationship skills and social awareness is to have students send an email to a classmate who was absent. The email both acknowledges that the missing student is a valuable asset to the class but also provides them with notes from the day or maybe a link to resources so they can easily catch up. This could be applied to students who are homebound as well.
- **Anticipate Needs With an Autoresponder:** It was bound to happen. As email is one of the predominant forms of communication, not providing a response within a 24–48-hour period can appear like a form of negligence. Figure 1.5 does provide some simple standard responses to navigate these delays. Others have adopted a more creative approach and crafted custom autoresponders that not only inform recipients that a response might be delayed, but also anticipate their recipient’s needs, and even provide tips for getting a quick response. The beginning of the year is a hectic time and I receive heaps of emails that I can’t answer in a timely fashion and that tend to be similar requests. To expedite support and clear messaging, my colleague and I created an autoresponder (Figure 1.6) while we were on campus so teachers were aware of what we were doing, but also might be able to come to a resolution with the information we provided.

Subject: We Are on Campus and Will Be With You Soon...

Thanks for the email! We want you to know that we will get back with you, but it's taking a little longer than usual due to the rush at the beginning of the school year. We thought it might be helpful to add this autoresponder with a few frequently asked questions and our answers to them so you might be able to find answers sooner:

- **Students Having Issues Logging in to Turnitin:** Check out this [video tutorial to support you](#).
- **Students Not Able to See Folders in Google Classroom:** Check out this video tutorial:
 - [Sharing files and folders in Google Drive and Classroom \(computer version\)](#)
 - [Sharing files and folders \(computer version with closed captioning\)](#)
 - [Sharing files and folders in Google Drive and Classroom \(iPad version\)](#)
- **Students Who Did Not Pick Up iPads:** Have them Email Phillip Gallagher (pgallagher@anyschool.net) or visit his office.
- **Students Without Google Login or With Faulty Google Login:** Email the Tech Services Help Desk (TSHelpDesk@anyschool.net).
- **Self Service:**
 - **Students Without Access to Self-Service:** Make sure students are on ESCHOOL network and that their date and time in settings is set to automatic. Self-Service should appear in a few hours. If it does not, please send students to the new Juice Bar (in the old attendance office next to the Commons.)
 - **Students and Teachers With Inoperable Self-Service:** If a student or teacher's Self-Service app is not working, delete it and it should reappear in a few hours and be operable. If it does not, please send students to the Juice Bar in the library during 4th and 5th period.
- **Suggest Apps for School App Store:** Here is a direct link to the [Google Form](#).
- **Prompt Replies and Technological Emergencies:** Technology Services is working diligently to complete existing work orders. Please continue to submit work orders in this manner: If you are experiencing a technological emergency, please call the help desk directly at #021891 or email the Tech Services Help Desk directly (TSHelpDesk@anyschool.net).

 [Click here for Hold Music](#) (if you like).:)

We look forward to talking with you. Have a great year!

Figure 1.6 On-Campus Autoresponder

While I don't imagine most students will create these for themselves, I do think drafting samples for their own teachers or for a historical or political figure gives them some experience with anticipating needs and discovering the best formats of communication. I have included a professional example (Figure 1.7) to highlight the variety of content that can be included in one. This activity could also be easily paired with generating emails from the past.

Subject: TechChef App-solutely Awesome Autoresponder

I realize that autoresponders may seem impersonal and obnoxious, but I also realize that we have limited hours in our day to complete personal and professional tasks and respond accordingly. I am currently in the final stages of editing my first book, *Cultivating Communication in the Classroom*, and want to ensure the quality of this resource for educators before it goes off to typesetting shortly.

I sincerely apologize for my delayed response. In an effort to connect you with the answers and resources you may be seeking, I thought it might be helpful to provide a few frequently asked questions and my answers:

- **I am looking for a slide deck you shared at our event:** All of my slide decks, infographics, and handouts are posted on my portfolio linked here: <https://techchef4u.com/portfolio>
- **I want to book Lisa Johnson to speak:** Please complete the Google Form.
- **I want Lisa Johnson to write a guest blog post:** Please email me the specifics of the request (e.g., website, topic, timeline, length of post).
- **I am looking for your bio and head shots for our program:** Visit my site for multiple versions of my bio and some options: <https://techchef4u.com/speaking>
- **I would love to meet up at an event:** I love to connect with educators in person. I have all of my upcoming events posted on my site. Let's chat on Twitter (@TechChef4u) and set up a time to meet.

If you are still reading . . . I would love to share a few more alliterative inspirations with you:

- **Passions on Pinterest:** I love adult coloring books, slide design, graphic novels and much more. Follow my boards on Pinterest.
- **Curated Conferences:** One of my favorite pastimes is sketch note summaries. I have Thinglinked many of my notes with additional resources.
- **Helpful Hacking:** I am all about life and productivity hacks. Check out my posts on email bankruptcy, custom desktop wallpaper organization, and handy ways to reboot your handouts.
- **Step-by-Step Student iPad Base Camps:** Students need professional development too, so I have posted a guide to how to create iPad Base Camps for secondary students that will totally knock your socks off!

I sincerely app-reciate your time and patience and will craft an original response shortly. 😊

Figure 1.7 Personal or Professional Autoresponder

- **Embrace Emoticons and Abbreviations:** Let's face it. Emoticons are here—for a while at least. As an educator, I see this less of a perversion of the serious literary form and more of a way that visual literacy has seeped in to written communications. I will be the first to admit that I have embraced this art form as a vehicle for context clues and tone and even use it to soften or clear messages that could be misinterpreted otherwise. A simple activity for this would be to have students write the same phrase with three different emoticons and then discuss how the recipient might react or respond to each phrase and emoticon (e.g., “you got a letter today” 😊, “you got a letter today,” 😊)

and “you got a letter today” 😊 [emoticon images courtesy of Creative Commons, <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/us/>]. While these statements in textual form are all clearly the same, they convey a very different thought and feeling from the sender. A few books to get you started considering this format in a curricular mindset are *Yolo Juliet*, *srsly Hamlet*, and *Macbeth #killingit*.

- **Class Newsletter:** Have students create and maintain an email newsletter of classroom learning and activities, then track and discuss the analytics. Or have students generate a newsletter for the student body to address communication best practices or digital health and wellness for teens. Beyond providing an authentic experience for students and beefing up parent communications, tools like MailChimp also provide analytics (e.g., how many people opened the newsletter, how many clicked on the links, what time of day people read the newsletter). These data could be used formatively for students to change their content and modes of delivery to accommodate their audience.
- **Email an Expert:** There are few people who can't be contacted via email. What better way than to have students email an expert in the field they are studying, and maybe even get a response. A few years ago, I was designing a workshop on the topic of the SAMR model for technology integration (e.g., Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, Redefinition), and thought I would ask the father of the SAMR model, Ruben R. Puentedura. I never imagined he would reply, let alone provide feedback (Figure 1.8).

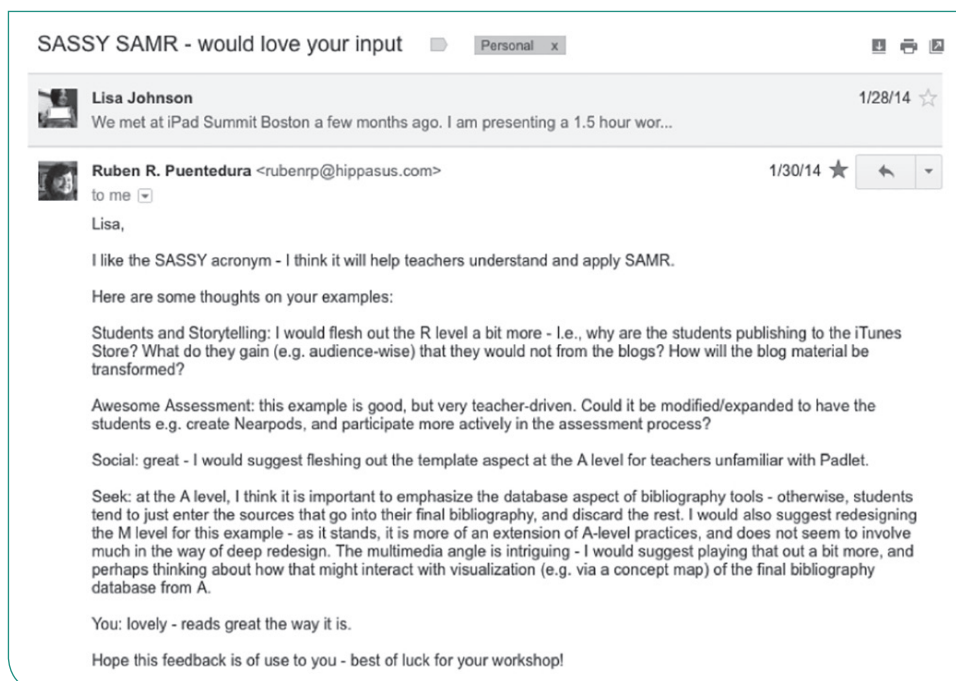


Figure 1.8 Email an Expert With Dr. Ruben R. Puentedura

While email is an on-ramp to many tools, it is merely a vehicle. Where we drive it, and how we drive it is the most important. If we use email to fuel teaching conflict resolution, problem-solving, empathy, and self-advocacy, then we provide students the opportunity to take these skills and apply them to email, life's circumstances, and whatever communication tools they encounter in the future.

Chapter Resources

Email Etiquette Preparation Inventory Assessment

I tend to get easily distracted when I have to digest large portions of new information. I find clipping out the high points and topics from that bulk of information helps me better assimilate and apply that information without being overwhelmed. To that end, I have extracted the main points and action items to support you while you mull over email etiquette in your classroom:

- What are the reasons my students need an email?
- How will I facilitate the discussion of email etiquette and best practices of communication with my students?
- What activities will I use to provide students opportunities to practice email in authentic ways?

Share your answers using the hashtag #cultivatecomm.

My Students' Self-Assessment Checklist

This checklist can be used as a pre- and post-assessment. It is merely here to provide a way to determine what you think your students know and how you have impacted their strength of communication through the information shared in this chapter:

- My students can compose an email designed for a variety of audiences that elicits a clear response.
- My students can troubleshoot sending large attachments and a variety of file types.
- My students know how to decipher and avoid spam and phishing scams.
- My students understand the difference between personal and professional communications and can craft clear communications for a variety of audiences.
- My students can use email as a vehicle for proactive self-advocacy, anticipating the needs of others, and problem-solving.

Additional Resources and Reading

- Email Etiquette Communication Catcher (found in Appendix B and on <https://resources.corwin.com/cultivatingcomm>)
- Suggested Reading and Resources (www.pinterest.com/techchef4u/email-etiquette)

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