

Sample Welcome Email #1

HELLO EVERYONE!

Welcome to the PLS on-line course, *Cultural Competence: A Transformative Journey (CCOL)*, an interactive learning experience that strives to inspire us all to be, in the words of Gandhi, "the change we wish to see in the world". The course will open and officially begin on Tuesday, October 6. I am honored to be your facilitator and to join you in this journey of acquiring knowledge and skills that will enable us to increase educational equality and social justice in a diverse world.

The content, activities, and assignments in this course have all been intentionally created to provide you with a unique and interactive learning experience. This 8-week journey strives to prepare each of you to be culturally competent educators, ones that have both the will and the skill to create effective change needed for ALL students to succeed.

Some of you come to our learning community with lots of on-line experience while others are new to e-learning. If this is your first course using the Sakai Learning Management System, you are expected to complete the "Sakai Tutorial Course." To do this, go to <http://pls.rsmart.com>. Click *Master_SakaiTutorial* from the Quicklinks bar or the MySites drop-down menu. Tutorial activities allow you to become familiar with Sakai, our Learning Management System, and Module 1 must be completed prior to the start of the course.

You will not be able to access the course itself until the start date, but you will be able to access the Sakai Tutorial course by the end of the business day Thursday, October 1st (I believe).

You will also need to purchase the book, "We Can't Teach What We Don't Know" by Gary Howard. It is available through most major book sellers and is usually available to order on-line. The remainder of the course information will be available within the course.

You will receive confirmation and log-in directions from PLS. As soon as the course begins, you will be able to click on and read important information, called "Getting Started" and the "Course Guide". This information is carefully laid out and should guide you in a step-by-step fashion through the mechanics of the course.

Try and access the course during the first day of class, *Tuesday, October 6th*. This will allow me to see who has been able to log-in correctly and will give you a chance to look around the Sakai format. I have placed a phone call from my home, xxx-xxx-xxxx, to all of you and encourage you to notify me if you have any questions .

I look forward to working and learning with each of you this quarter. You will get the most benefit and feel pleased with your progress if you manage your time by following the guidelines for logging in on a regular basis, keeping up with the assignments, and posting comments throughout the week.

This is a wonderful course and PLS has done a great job in presenting it in an on-line format. Whether you are a novice or experienced at on-line learning, I am confident you will navigate the course with ease and learn a great deal both from the course content and from the interactions with your fellow on-line learners.

Please make sure you have officially registered for this course with your university--

Go to the PLS website, plsweb.com

Click on "University Partners" in the yellow Graduate Courses section.

Click on the College/University through which you are receiving credit.

Click on the link to "PLS Online Course Participant Information" in the right column.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at:

*xxxxxx@plsweb.com

*cell--xxx.xxx.xxxx

*home-- xxx.xxx.xxxx

Take care,

Connie Lower

CCOL Facilitator

Sample Welcome Email #2



Judy Lalli
xxx/xxx-xxxx
xxxxxx@plsweb.com

Welcome to *STAR, Successful Teaching for Acceptance of Responsibility® Online*. I trained with Chick Moorman, course author, and taught *STAR onsite* for many years. The online course is just as meaningful and effective in presenting instructional approaches that empower students to be *self-directed, responsible* learners.

The course will also be helpful to *you*, both *personally* and *professionally*. You'll discover how to renew your energy as you look at ways to take actions that show *self-determination*. You'll become clear on your own sense of *personal power* and learn to use this knowledge to avoid power struggles with students.

Login Procedure and Pre-class Requirements

Before next week, go to <http://pls.rsmart.com>
This is Sakai, our online platform.

Then, in a few days, you will receive your username and password and have immediate access to *My Workspace*. (*My Workspace* is an area where you can keep personal documents, create new sites, maintain a schedule, store resources, and much more.)

It is very important to go through Module 1 of the Sakai Tutorials course, which you can access from the Quickinks bar or MySites section, so that you will be comfortable with *Sakai* before the course begins.

You can access *Help* in the left navigation bar at any time. In the Sakai Tutorials course, you will find all kinds of information about our online learning expectations, including the rubrics for grading and important technology information.

Please *update your profile* in *My Workspace* with current contact information as one of your first tasks. This is your first opportunity to model the *STAR* model of *self-responsibility*!

On **Tuesday, June 1**, you'll have access to the course itself, and we can be off and running! At that time, you will be able to download important information, including the **Syllabus** and **Course Guide**. This information will guide you step-by-step through the course.

Required Materials

Besides the terrific information provided within the course itself, the books we will be using are:

1. *Teaching Discipline And Self-respect: Effective Strategies, Anecdotes, And Lessons for Successful Classroom Management* by Sirinam S. Khalsa
2. *Teacher Talk: What It Really Means* by Chick Moorman and Nancy Weber.

These can be ordered new through the plsweb.com website or used from various websites. If you have difficulty obtaining either book, please let me know **ASAP**.

*I urge you to go to <http://chickmoorman.com> to sign up for his **free newsletter**. I think you will enjoy his meaningful stories and helpful tips for teachers (and parents, for those of you wearing both hats!!)*

Technology Issues

Please go to the plsweb.com website for information on technology requirements for taking online courses. (Note: preferred browsers are **Internet Explorer** for Windows and **Firefox** for Mac.)

Important University Information

Please remember to download and submit all necessary college-specific paperwork. The information for **(name of University)** is available in the **"College & University Partners"** section at plsweb.com

The grade scale established by **(name of University)** is:
(ex. 100-90% = A 80-89% = B 70-79% = C 60-69% = F)

Because various colleges have different scales, rather than show a letter grade the **Gradebook** in **Sakai** will show a percent and either **P (Passing)** or **NP (Not Passing)**. Just use the percentage shown and the grading scale above to determine your current or final letter grade.

Reassuring Phone Call

I'll be calling you this week to introduce myself and deal with any concerns you may have. Be assured that PLS has done a great job in presenting this course in an online format. Whether you are a novice or experienced at online learning, I am confident you'll navigate the course with ease and learn a great deal both from the course content and from interactions with your fellow online learners.

Checklist Before Course Begins

So, please do the following before June 1:

1. Log into Sakai. Go through the first module of the Sakai Tutorials course.
2. In My Workspace, update your profile with current contact information.
3. In My Workspace, in Preferences, set your correct time zone.
4. Obtain the course materials.
5. Reply to this email and return my phone call or call me first!

I love this course with a passion, and I look forward to sharing a wonderful 8 weeks with you!

Judy

Sample Welcome Email #3

Hello-

Welcome to PLS Differentiated Instruction!

My name is Laura Mackenthun, and I will be facilitating this course. My "day job" is working as a media specialist at a middle school serving 900 6-8 grade students.

Whether you are an experienced online learner or one who is new to online coursework, you will find a community of colleagues eager to share in new knowledge and challenges. The course is very interactive and meaningful and the platform we use, Sakai, is an exciting venue for discussion of all the concepts with others like you.

The activities and content of this course have been designed to bridge the gap from the most current research and theories to the practice of differentiated instruction. The goal for this course is to bring to life the important concepts and principles that provide the framework for DI, and to make what can be a complex and confusing process both simple and understandable. Above all, this course is about understanding what differentiated instruction is, why it is important, how it works, and how teachers can put that knowledge to work in a way that is both practical and effective.

You will receive validated research in differentiated instruction and you will develop effective research-based strategies connected to the research for immediate use. The course is intended for all teachers and administrators and has been invaluable in helping them understand some of the nuances of differentiated instruction. You will have the opportunity to reflect on your own strategies, increase your understanding of your learners and learn many other tools that will benefit your students based on the wealth of resources and strategies available to you in the course materials. The interactions with other teachers about the course content is an added bonus.

Some notes and things to know at this point:

1. If this is your first PLS course in Sakai, you should receive an email on Friday with your log in information. If you have taken previous PLS courses in Sakai, your log in information is the same as it was before.
2. Please complete the Sakai Tutorial course (module 1) before the course begins on Tuesday, January 19. It is very important that you do this "pre-course" work so that you are ready to begin the course material and are comfortable with the technology.
3. You will see the course information on Sakai on Tuesday, January 19.
4. Complete the required paperwork for your university. You can find all those details here: <http://www.plsweb.com/Our-Partners/Universities-and-Colleges>
5. Create your profile on the home page so others in the class can get to know you.

My contact information is as follows: Until the course begins, please email me at xxxxxxxxxxxx@plsweb.com.

After the course begins, the best way to contact me is to use the messaging feature within Sakai. I will generally make a quick check in for messages in the early morning and then again for more time during the evening hours. Use the above email as an alternate.

My home phone number is xxx-xxx-xxxx. Most days I am home from school by 5pm Central Time. Weekends are also a great time to reach me by phone. We have three busy, active children, so we are on the run often, but we generally don't go too far.

If you have questions, please let me know. I am looking forward to seeing you online and working with you over the next eight weeks!

Laura

Sample Welcome Email #4

Hello Everyone!

I have spoken with many of you by phone, and I hope this letter serves as a warm welcome to a wonderful course. I am looking forward to getting to know each one of you as we work together through this course.

In this course, you'll learn practical strategies to help free yourself from constantly dealing with behavioral and organizational issues and empower your students to take responsibility for their own learning experience. You'll learn and practice skills for orchestrating classroom life and learning so that instruction flows smoothly, student misbehavior is minimized, and learning potential is maximized.

You will have many opportunities to get to know each other just like you would in a traditional course. The difference is you will have the opportunity to work at your own pace in your home or wherever your computer is located, at any time of the day or night.

I look forward to working with you. You will get the most from the course if you manage your time by following the guidelines for logging in on a regular basis, keeping up with the assignments, and posting comments throughout the week.

Please check the PLS website for information on required computer information: browsers, etc.

Remember to download all necessary college-specific paperwork. Go to the PLS website, and click on "College & University Partners" toward the right of the heading. Click on the College/University through which you are receiving credit, and carefully read instructions for university specific registration forms to complete. Marygrove students do not have a registration form to complete, but Friends and Wilkes students DO have a form, which can be found on this link. Also, be sure to read all "Important Pre-Class Online Instructions" where you will find valuable information.

Soon you will receive confirmation and login directions from PLS. Please log on and review the Sakai Tutorial course (at least module 1 prior to class). These can be found by clicking the course name on the Quicklinks bar or selecting the course name from the MySites drop-down section.

PLEASE NOTE: Our formerly nine week courses have now become eight weeks long. The first introductory week has been eliminated, to avoid repetition for those of you taking multiple courses. Therefore, it is vital that you go through the tutorial course yourself so that you become comfortable with the format before the start of class. Please update your profile as one of your first tasks.

As soon as the course begins after 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, February 16, you will be able to click on and read important information in the Course Guide. This information is carefully laid out and should guide you in a step-by-step fashion through the course.

Be aware that if you want to work from work (on your own time) some districts have blocks and filters that prevent full access to the course.

This is a wonderful course, and PLS has done a great job of presenting it in an online format. Whether you are a novice or experienced at online learning, I am confident you will navigate the course with ease and learn a great deal both from the course content and from the interactions with your fellow online learners.

I look to having a great experience with you in this course. "See" you online next week!

~Kim

Kim Syvertsen

xxxxxxxxx@plsweb.com

Sample Welcome Email #5

Welcome to All.

This is confirmation and welcome to Reading Across the Curriculum™ Online which will begin on Tuesday, January 19 and continue for eight weeks. This course provides research-based active reading comprehension strategies that participants can apply to their grade level or content area. I believe that you will all be successful as you fine tune your online skills and explore the ins and outs of Sakai throughout this course.

By now, you should have received an email containing your log in information. If not, please let me know ASAP or contact xxxxxxxx@plsweb.com to retrieve this information.

It is very important that you log in to Sakai to complete Module 1 of the Sakai Tutorial course. Here you will find invaluable information that will help you to successfully navigate Sakai. You will not be able to officially log into the course however, until Tuesday, January 19.

Third Party Materials:

Benjamin, A . (2007) But I'm Not a Reading Teacher: Strategies for literacy instruction in the content areas. Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education.

Macaulay, D. (1979) Motel of the Mysteries. New York: Houghton Mifflin.

University Information: Make sure that you have officially registered for this course via your university. Enter the PLS website at www.plsweb.com and click on university partners .

In the meantime, you may reach me at xxx-xxx-xxxx or via email at xxxxx@comcast.net. Please respond to this email so that I know that I have your correct email information. Plan on logging into the course the first day for important information. I look forward to seeing you, although not face-to-face, in Sakai.

Enjoy the weekend and we will chat soon.
Sandra Webb