Online Learning Tips and Tricks

Taking one or more online courses? Here are some tips and tricks to help you succeed in your online classes.

1. ***Treat your online course like it's a real class (because it is!)***:

   When it comes to online classes, you need to have the discipline to sit down and say, "I am going to work on this," as well as the dedication to actually follow through. Though you can be flexible as to *when* you choose to complete your work during the week, you can't put it off indefinitely. Remember, your counselor has given you classes to fulfill graduation requirements and obtain credits. If you end up not passing your online class, you may have to do credit recovery or take more classes later on to make up the lost credits.

2. ***Set up a schedule for working on your courses:***

   This schedule depends on how many online courses you are taking. If you are full time online, you may want to structure your day like a normal school day. You may find it helpful to wake up early as if you are headed to in person classes. You could work on one class for an hour and a half (like in person), take a break, and then begin working on another class for a set period of time. You could also create an A/B Day schedule for yourself where you work on four classes on A day and another four classes on B day. Whatever your online course load is, make a schedule and follow it, so you can stay on top of your classes.

3. *Practice time management*:

The flexibility to create your own schedule is often one of the biggest appeals of taking online classes. But that freedom can also be detrimental if you do not have solid time management skills. Without them, you might easily find yourself cramming before classes or handing in subpar assignments. Many times students can get so far behind that they give up on courses. Don't let that be you!

Though how you manage your time will depend on your schedule, learning style, and personality, here are some universally valuable tips to help you practice and improve your time management skills:

- Look at the syllabus at the start of the semester and make note of major assignments. Mark them on a calendar you check regularly so you know what your workload looks like in the weeks ahead. Don't forget to factor in prior commitments that may interfere with your regular study schedule, such as extracurricular activities and your work schedule, so you can give yourself enough extra time to complete assignments.
- Create a weekly schedule that you follow, designating certain hours each week to working on your classes. Commit to making your online coursework part of your weekly routine, and set reminders for yourself to complete these tasks.
- When working on your assignments, try time-blocking, allotting yourself a certain amount of time for each task before moving on to the next one and setting a timer to keep you accountable.

4. ***Create a regular study space and stay organized***:

Set up a dedicated learning space for studying. By completing your work there repeatedly, you'll begin to establish a routine. Experiment to discover which type of setting boosts your productivity.

Setting up a regular workspace or office will also help you to stay organized. When setting up your study space, make sure you:

- Have a high-speed internet connection
- Have any study materials you may need; notebooks, pens/pencils, planners, etc.
- Have headphones for listening to lectures or discussions (especially important when you are studying in shared spaces)

Remember---Working on assignments from a slouched position and streaming Netflix at the same time is not ideal if you aim to be productive. Find a table or a desk to sit at to help you focus.

5. *Eliminate distractions*:

From Netflix to social media to any number of other things that could steal your attention, you'll be faced with many distractions that can easily derail your studies. The best online students know how to lessen these distractions and set aside time to focus.

Regardless of where you choose to work, consider turning your cell phone off to avoid losing focus every time a text message or notification pops up. You may also want to put your phone in "cell phone jail". You can put your phone in another room, give it to a parent, or turn it on silent and keep it at least 10 feet away.

 If you are still wanting to listen to music, you can access Spotify or other music apps on a desktop. And if you're still having trouble resisting the temptation to check your email or surf the web, try downloading a website blocker. Using applications like Cold Turkey and Freedom can help eliminate distractions by blocking the apps or websites that tend to compete for your attention, such as Instagram and Snapchat.

6. Find ways to stay motivated: Get up from the screen and take a walk around the block, get a snack, play with a pet, etc. between assignments.

   It also may help to remember the "big picture". Think of graduation, your future career, and other goals that you have that would require you to graduate.

Time Management Tips:

1. Use a planner or an online calendar: Keep track of when assignments are due, important deadlines, extracurricular activities, and when you work. This will help you plan ahead and find times to work on assignments before they are due.
2. Try not to multitask: Multitasking decreases your productivity.
3. Block out distractions: Make sure to avoid surfing the web excessively. It's easy to become distracted by the internet and social media.
4. Reward yourself: At the end of your study session, reward yourself by allowing yourself to go online if you'd like. It's important to reward yourself after a job well done in order to avoid burnout. Otherwise, it will be difficult to concentrate on even the simplest tasks. You can reward yourself by celebrating your accomplishments and treating yourself to something you truly enjoy, whether that's watching your favorite show on Netflix or hanging out with friends.
5. Get a good night's sleep: Sleep is essential to rest your body and keep your mind fresh for the next day. Try to get seven to eight hours of rest a night. Pulling all-nighters is less productive than studying consistently. Include sleep in your schedule, and you can reap huge rewards.

<u>Online Learning Resources</u>

***The below resources were used to create this document.

- ○ https://www.northeastern.edu/graduate/blog/tips-for-taking-online-classes/
- ○ https://www.usf.edu/education/about-us/news/2020/tips-success-online-classes.aspx
- ○ https://www.developgoodhabits.com/time-management-worksheets/
- ○ https://blog.edmentum.com/student-tips-5-virtual-school-productivity-hacks-you-might-not-know
- ○ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_7iV19S0Yo8