Quick Tips for Online Learning Success

Adjusting to an Online Environment

Making the transition from face-to-face to online learning is not always easy. Whether you are a remote-learning veteran or are taking a course for the first time, the following tips will help to make your experience as meaningful as possible.

Community of Learners

While you may not be meeting face-to-face with your instructors or classmates, this does not mean that you will not be connected or engaged. In fact, regularly engaging with your team and peers may now be more vital to your individual success than ever before.

"In one study, lack of social interaction was found to be the largest single barrier to student success online."[1]

Set Yourself Up for Success

The key to success with your online course is in establishing study habits that work for you. Here are a few ideas that have worked well for many students in the past.

1. **Know What You're Learning**
   Read the course objectives and preview assignments. Use them to fast-track your note-taking and to focus your search for key takeaways.[2]

2. **Take notes**
   Never underestimate this old-school but effective method for retaining and recalling knowledge. Writing notes allows your brain to take what you are learning and to create synaptic connections, drawing conclusions and connecting the relationship between the new ideas and prior knowledge.[3]

3. **Check In Regularly**
   Make a habit of logging into the course portal at least twice a week so that you stay engaged and do not miss anything.

4. **Work Smarter, Not Harder**
   Stay focused while you work, but take short 5-10 minute breaks at regular intervals. Devote a solid block of time for each course. Avoid distractions by closing other apps and windows, and by silencing your phone. Even better - consider putting your phone away altogether, as research

---

[1] Source Click the link to read more about barriers to online learning.
[2] Source Click the link to read more about self-directed learning.
[3] Source and Source Click the link to read more about the cognitive benefits to note-taking.

indicates that the presence of a mobile phone in your workspace can deplete your cognitive capacity. [4]

5. **Keep It Honest**

   It may be tempting to cheat or plagiarize because it feels like no one is watching while you are working remotely, but the LMS creates auto-generated reports of learner activities, engagement times, and locations, and they are constantly being monitored by administrative staff.

6. **Worth the Effort**

   It may take longer to complete weekly coursework in an online environment than it would if you were meeting face-to-face. This is due to the asynchronous environment, and the fact that you will have more writing assignments. Rest assured that the more actively engaged you are, the more you will learn and retain what you are learning. [5]

Tips for Cooperative Success

Online courses require unique ways of interacting with your peers. These guidelines may help you work and communicate more effectively in teams and with your peers in an online environment.

1. **Stay Positive and Professional**

   You are enrolled in an academic course in a graduate-level program. The same decorum and conduct that is expected in face-to-face courses is also expected in online interactions. When replying to peers about their work, for example, stick with comments about what you found insightful or offer politely-worded and constructive feedback.

2. **Watch Your Tone**

   Without facial or verbal cues to denote tone, a written message may be misconstrued by the intended audience. Avoid attempting humour in your writing. Be sure to say exactly what you mean. If you question whether you should say or type it, don't. [6]

3. **Find Coping Strategies**

   Manage your own stress by finding coping strategies [7] that work best for you. When you are in control of your emotions, you can better control your reactions to inflammatory situations. [8]

---

[4] Source Click the link to read more about reducing distractions to increase cognitive capacity.
[5] Source Click link to read more about online work effort.
[6] Source Click link to read more about affecting tone without non-verbal cues.
[7] Source Click link to read more about coping strategies for managing stressful situations.
[8] Source Click link to read more about team conflict management.